



**Children and Young People
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
12th July 2011

**Report from the Director of
Strategy, Partnerships and
Improvement**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Preventing Youth Offending Task Group – Final Report

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the Preventing Youth Offending Task Group, which are being presented to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its endorsement.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee endorses the task group's recommendations, for them to be passed to the council's Executive for approval.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 In late 2009, a task group examining the safety of pupils travelling to and from school found that a small number of young people committed a disproportionate amount of crime. In response, a task group to review youth offending was convened early in 2010, but was unable to complete its work before the council elections that year. The task group was revived in October 2010 with a new membership and a revised scope, placing greater emphasis upon the prevention agenda and diversionary projects, evidence from local young people, and a holistic approach which went beyond reviewing the work of a specific service. Early evidence persuaded the task group to place its focus on the decisive factors much earlier in a child's life which influence important outcomes, and the services which aim to reduce those factors where they are harmful or promote them where they are helpful.

- 3.2 In order to carry out its review, members of the task group:

- Carried out a review of literature on developing policy and practice in the field of youth crime prevention and early intervention in families by the Audit Commission, the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial

Behaviour, the Graham Allen Review of Early Intervention, the Ministry of Justice, and NHS Croydon with Croydon Council;

- Consulted guidance and support for professionals working in the relevant fields, such as Brent's guidance for practitioners and managers working within the Common Assessment Framework, and a briefing by the Social Care Institute for Excellence;
- Considered relevant local strategic plans and resources, such as Brent's Children and Young People's Plan 2009-11, the draft Children and Young People's Needs Assessment as at 2010, the Brent Parenting Strategy 2010-11, and an early draft of the Service Plan for 2010/11-2011/12 by the Youth Offending Service;
- Reviewed relevant reports shedding light on local performance and circumstances, including the findings of an Ofsted unannounced inspection in November 2010, a report of the Early Intervention Locality Team Manager to the Schools Forum, the latest available progress update on the Parenting Strategy, an assessment of the potential impact of terminating funding to the Place2Be hub in Brent, a previous report to this committee by the Youth Offending Service, and the School Improvement Service's last report to this committee on education standards;
- Took evidence from a range of practitioners and managers from within the Children and Families directorate of the council, as well as from witnesses in other sectors, including Brent Centre for Young People, Hornstars, The Place2Be, the Tricycle Theatre and Brent Youth Radio;
- Attended a seminar held by the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour;
- Met and spoke with young people at Hornstars, Brent Youth Matters 2, the Right Track and Brent Youth Parliament; as well as using other methods to consult Brent Care In Action, and young people known to the Youth Offending Service; and
- Were interviewed live on air on Brent Youth Radio.

3.3 The members of the task group were:

- Councillor Helga Gladbaum (chair)
- Councillor Patricia Harrison, and
- Councillor Ann Hunter.

3.4 The task group has made 19 recommendations which it hopes will be endorsed by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The members of the task group are of the view that these recommendations can make a positive contribution to preventing youth offending in Brent. The recommendations address the following subject areas:

- A change in emphasis to effective early intervention
- Changes in practice
- Collaboration between agencies
- The crucial role of schools

- The crucial role of parents, and
- Other organisational issues.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The recommended commitment to prevention as a cost-effective long term approach to managing demand on services would involve changing how resources are currently allocated, with preventative services receiving more resources. This could come about through pooling of budgets by partners, an option to be explored by the Complex Families Task and Finish Group. These recommendations ought to produce savings in later years, which would be shared amongst the agencies which address the needs of families with poor outcomes.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 The recommendations relating to establishing effective networks for vulnerable and isolated parents, and determining the most effective methods for promoting parenting support, will include targeting those parents for whom English is not their first language, and who are less likely to take up such services.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 Staff across relevant teams in the council, and in partner agencies (particularly the NHS), must be enabled to work differently to meet the aims of the new Prevention Strategy (including a revised data-sharing protocol and potential cross-disciplinary working), to make the Team Around the Child more effective, and generally improve collaboration between agencies. This will include joint training, and opportunities for reflection and learning about emerging practice in their professional development.

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