

 Brent	Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2020
	Report from the Head of Early Help
Inspection of Youth Offending Services in Brent	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
No. of Appendices:	1 Appendix 1: Performance Information
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 SUMMARY

This report will update members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee about the outcome of the Youth Offending Service inspection, undertaken in August 2019 by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). It outlines progress made in relation to the implementation of the inspection recommendations and provides information on the performance of Brent Youth Offending Service in general.

HMIP Inspection

1.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) carried out an inspection of Brent Youth Offending Service (YOS) in August 2019, published on 18th December 2019: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/brentyos/>

1.2 The overall rating for Brent YOS is 'good'.

1.3 The Chief Inspector of Probation in his foreword to the main report commented,

"...managers have produced a risk profile that highlights the work needed to manage and reduce the significant proportion of children who pose a high risk of serious harm – just over 50 per cent of the YOS caseload, one of the highest proportions of any YOS we have inspected."

"Brent YOS is a good, well-led service with a stable, committed workforce, intent on improving outcomes for a vulnerable and high-risk group of children and young people".

"We have concluded the YOS is doing a good job in a tough environment."

1.4 The table below provides an overview summary of the inspection ratings:

A summary of the ratings

Overall rating for the Brent Youth Service Team	Good
Fieldwork 19th-23rd August 2019	

1	Organisational delivery	
1.1	Governance and leadership	Good
1.2	Staff	Good
1.3	Partnerships and services	Requires improvement
1.4	Information and facilities	Requires Improvement

2	Court disposals	
2.1	Assessment	Good
2.2	Planning	Good
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good
2.4	Reviewing	Good

3	Out-of-court disposals	
3.1	Assessment	Good
3.2	Planning	Good
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Requires improvement
3.4	Joint working	Good

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members of the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the content of this report.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority in England and Wales to deliver youth justice services in line with a statutory framework that outlines YOS responsibilities.

The Brent Youth Offending Service is a multidisciplinary, multi-agency service that works with children and young people aged 10-18 years and their families to deliver statutory responsibilities in relation to a wide range of provision. This includes out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, group work and interventions, as well as work with young people who are in custody.

Comprised of representatives from the local authority, Police, National Probation Service, CAMHS, health, education and local service providers, the YOS supervises 10–18 year-olds who have:

- (a) either received a court sentence, or
- (b) have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – “out of court” policing powers are used as an alternative to being prosecuted by the courts.

The YOS also focuses on achieving three Youth Justice Outcomes:

- Reduction in youth re-offending.
- Reduction in the numbers of first time entrants to the justice system.
- Reduction in the use of youth custody.

3.2 Local context

Brent YOS is based in the Children and Young People department and is managed by the Head of Early Help. The focus is on early intervention, reflecting the widespread recognition that it is better to identify and deal with problems early rather than respond when difficulties have become acute and demand action by statutory or more intensive services.

Governance of the YOS is the responsibility of the YOS Management Board, which meets every quarter and is chaired by the Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes. The YOS board reports regularly to the Safer Brent Partnership.

Brent’s Children and Young People’s department Practice Framework provides a foundation for how the YOS works with children, young people and their families and carers in Brent. This includes the learning and development offer for staff. A trauma informed approach is being added to the practice framework in 2020 in order to promote meaningful contact and trusting relationships, the removal of any unconscious bias and supporting interventions that influence and manage offending behaviours.

The YOS supports effective multi-agency partnership working to support the development of contextual safeguarding approaches in Brent. For example, the YOS is leading CYP departmental approaches in relation to safety mapping with young people.

The work of Brent YOS is delivered in accordance with the Brent Borough Plan (2019-23) strategic theme: A Borough Where We Can All Feel Safe, Secure, Happy and Healthy. Progress in relation to the below two outcomes is reported quarterly:

Strategic Theme: A Borough Where We Can All Feel Safe, Secure, Happy and Healthy

Outcome	YOS Key Performance Indicator
Reduction in anti-social behaviour, the risk of harm and re-offending	Rate of youth reoffending in Brent
Reduction in violent crime, including gang and knife crime	Number of young people in Brent who are first-time entrants to the youth justice system.

3.3 What HMIP does

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. They provide assurance on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. They inspect these services and publish inspection reports. They highlight good and poor practice, and use data and information to encourage good-quality services. There have been eight inspections in London during the current inspection cycle. Three local authorities (including Brent) have been judged "Good", and a further four "Requires Improvement". One judgement is awaiting publication.

3.4 How the inspection was structured.

Inspectors focused on areas within each of three domains. Scoring within Domain 1 (Organisational Delivery) was determined through an examination of policies, procedures and the effectiveness of partnership working. Findings were further examined in a series of focus group meetings involving operational and strategic staff and partners.

For domains 2 and 3, HMIP conducted a detailed examination of a sample of 29 court disposal cases and 20 out-of-court disposals. Inspectors considered a number of key questions about different aspects of quality, including whether there was sufficient analysis of the factors related to offending; the extent to which young offenders were involved in assessment and planning; and whether enough was done to assess the level of risk of harm posed – and to manage that risk.

4.0 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 Domain 1: Organisational delivery.

Organisational delivery. Key findings included:

- Leadership and management are clear and accessible, focus on service improvement and work to a proven evidence base. There is good use of data and information to analyse crime trends and design service delivery.
- The YOS invests in resources to support the family and prevent siblings from becoming involved in crime.
- There is effective joint working across the partnership at strategic, operational and frontline practice levels.
- Children benefit from a skilled, well-trained and stable workforce. Staff safety is given prominence, including the use of technology to keep staff safe.
- The views of children and young people are actively sought, and used to inform senior leaders about their experiences of services.

But:

- There are risks with the out-of-court disposal cases, both in terms of capacity and processes. The board is not given information on the potential for unnecessary criminalisation of children
- The number of children not in post-16 education or employment is too high and needs to be reduced. There are plans to provide services to these children in the future, but these services are not yet in place

- The venues where children can be seen are limited, and links to community support are underdeveloped.

4.2 Domain 2: Court Disposals. Key findings included:

- Assessments to identify children's desistance (the cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour) and safety and wellbeing needs are routinely completed to a good standard, including additional assessments of safety related to serious youth violence
- Planning to promote desistance and keep children safe is very good, and proportionate to assessed need. It sets out the interventions and actions that would best help the child or young person. Planning to manage risk is also good
- Interventions and services designed to promote desistance are delivered well. Children can access a wide range of interventions and services that help them to understand why they have offended, and the impact on other people. Work with children who are on court orders to support desistance is the strongest area, followed by work to promote safety and wellbeing and then work to reduce and manage risk of harm
- Reviewing is an active and helpful process, undertaken by case managers, team leaders and partner agencies.

But:

- Assessments of risk of harm to others are not as strong
- Planning does not always focus on the expressed needs of victims or provide clear contingency arrangements
- Reviews of safety and wellbeing sometimes do not reflect changes to the child's circumstances.

4.3 Domain 3: Out of Court Disposals. Key findings included:

- Overall, the quality of assessments in out-of-court disposal cases is good
- Planning is good overall.

But:

- There is potential for some children and young people to be unnecessarily criminalised when they have high levels of welfare and safety issues. A smaller number of youth cautions is being used, and this may be a contributory factor, limiting the range of options open to the decision-making panel
- There is a marked difference in quality between assessments for children on youth conditional cautions and those for children subject to community resolutions, known in Brent as 'triage cases'
- The implementation and delivery of services was rated as 'Requires improvement', owing to the inconsistent use and delivery of interventions to promote desistance and to address risk of harm. No interventions were delivered to reduce or manage risk of harm in any of the triage cases that were assessed.

4.4 Overall, the inspection noted favourably the approach taken to support the whole family, including siblings who were recognised as having a higher chance of becoming involved in offending. Referrals of siblings for early help are seen routinely. This is a key learning point for all partners as the journey to whole family

working and early intervention, led by the Troubled Families' initiative has taken time to be embedded. The inspection outcome provides additional evidence of the benefits of taking an early intervention approach with families.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANNING

5.1 HMIP made four recommendations to the YOS in order to further improve the quality of youth offending services in Brent:

1. Review and monitor decision-making in out-of-court disposals to ensure that there is no unnecessary criminalisation of children with high levels of welfare needs.
2. Review the resources available to assess, plan and then meet the needs of children and young people who receive a community resolution.
3. Provide services to children and young people who are not in education, training and employment (NEET).
4. Provide suitable and sufficient places for children and young people to be seen and supervised.

5.2 Actions are being taken to address each of the recommendations, monitored by the YOS Management Board.

1. *Decision making in out of court disposals:* Since the inspection there has been an increase in the number of youth cautions issued and the police have stopped using street cautions, effective from 6th January 2020. Decision-making by the out-of-court disposal panel, established in early 2019, is monitored more closely to ensure that children are not unnecessarily criminalised. The OOC Panel Terms of Reference and Procedures were revised in November 2019. A report including a case study is now presented to the YOS Management Board at each meeting. In addition, external scrutiny is provided by the recently formed North West London OOC Scrutiny Panel, led by the Police. They meet every six months to scrutinise a sample of OOCs from Barnet, Harrow and Brent. The panel consists of senior police, magistrates, YJB, MOPAC and YOS representatives.

The MPS 'Turning Point' programme, a deferred prosecution scheme was introduced into Brent in January 2020 with the intention of reducing disproportionality in youth justice outcomes and is available to professionals in defined circumstances. This process allows out of court disposals to be available to young people who do not admit guilt or provide no comment interviews. This reduces the risk of young people entering the Youth Justice System for minor offences. Young people often do not appreciate the consequences of no comment interviews.

2. *Resources available for community resolution cases:* Some additional resource (see Finance section below) has been obtained and this has been focused into the community resolution area in order to create capacity to improve assessments and planning at the Triage stage and to increase family support work. This will also give increased capacity to vary and increase the interventions available. The YOS management board partnership will be seeking continued commitment to maintain this level of support given the high levels of risk being managed by the YOS, evidenced within the inspection.

Practice development sessions will focus on OOC quality assurance

processes for Team Managers. An early help panel officer has been recruited to support connectivity and throughput to services. A restructure of YOS management, implemented in January 2020 now allows for increased management oversight of all aspects of OOCDC assessment, planning and delivery. Increased capacity will allow for identification of appropriate interventions working closely with community partners using a trauma informed approach.

3. *Services for children who are NEET*: 35% of YOS children over statutory school age are currently NEET compared to 2.4% of the general Brent population. This equates to 31 of 88 young people (January 2020). The long-term poor educational history of many of the young people who require YOS intervention makes this a challenging issue to overcome. There is a dedicated 'Connexions' worker based within the YOS and there is YOS management direct involvement in contract monitoring. Capacity will be increased by the end of March 2020 with the addition of an education lead worker to improve transition arrangements from year 11. The Management Board will receive a quarterly progress report. All staff have been made aware of the importance of this area in planning activity and the importance of ensuring accuracy of recording. The establishment of the Roundwood Alternative Provision school with wraparound youth provision in January 2021 will be an additional resource to improve this outcome.
4. *Sufficient places to see children and young people*: Brent Strategic Property services and the Police have been asked by the YOS Management Board Chair to explore alternative, safe locations to see young people from in the south of the borough and for this to be available from spring 2020. This planning will take place with the involvement of young people using a safety mapping approach. The creation of Family Hubs from existing Children's Centres from September 2020 will provide more capacity and the involvement of the Young Brent Foundation on the YOS Management Board from autumn 2019 will create further opportunities.

5.3 **How improvement will be monitored**

Progress updates, against a detailed improvement plan, are presented at quarterly meetings of the YOS Management Board. Key partners as detailed in the plan will take a lead in each improvement action and feedback to the monthly YOS management meetings and the partnership board operational meetings.

- 5.4 It is likely to be a minimum of four years before HMIP undertake their next inspection of Brent YOS.

6.0 **PREVENTION AND EARLY HELP INITIATIVES**

- 6.1 In 2016, following an internal restructure, Brent YOS was positioned within the Early Help service. This has enabled greater collaborative working with initiatives such as the Troubled Families' Programme, Family Solutions and the Accelerated Support Team (to prevent children from entering the care system). This has led to a substantial increase in the level of services and access to other resources that YOS young people and their families receive.
- 6.2 HMIP inspectors praised Brent for ensuring that wider early help provision is accessible to YOS service users. It was highlighted that this was very important in Brent as YOS staff are managing higher levels of risk of harm than other local

authorities inspected to date. There are however continuing challenges to provide the resources necessary to deliver the level of individual support recommended by HMIP in relation to out of court disposal, victims, and NEET work. Partnership contributions are vital if these areas are to improve further.

- 6.3 The Early Help service has been proactive in identifying and obtaining additional external funding. This includes securing three-year funding from the Mayor's Young Londoners Fund, to work with young people between 10 and 18 years, who are at risk of becoming involved in crime, not achieving their educational potential and at risk of poor health outcomes. The project adopts a whole family, trauma informed approach to address the underlying issues and build family resilience to improve the likelihood of young people fulfilling their potential or improving their life chances.
- 6.4 Young people supported by the YOS and their families will receive access to all three strands of the project:

Family coaches

Family Coaches will build strong relationships with families, to understand the underlying issues through an Early Help Assessment. They will guide families through the trauma recovery model to help them accept and understand how their past experiences impact upon family life. By proactively using the Signs of Safety approach, families will be supported to improve their understanding of their strengths.

Street Mentors for young people

Male and female Street Mentors, work with at-risk young people (between 10 to 18 years). This includes work outside of traditional service hours in order to engage young people in areas and places they go. By establishing trusting relationships, mentors are able to assist young people to make good decisions that improve outcomes and keep them safe.

Emotional well-being support

A young person's mental health practitioner undertakes mental health assessments and direct interventions with vulnerable young people in families experiencing crisis. This complements YOS based mental health provision from CAMHS and CNWL, which is only available to young people arrested by the police or in receipt of a police or court youth justice disposal.

- 6.5 The introduction of Family Wellbeing Centres, resulting from the agreed re-purposing of some children's centres, will be operational from September 2020. They will offer a range of universal services and targeted support for families with 0-18 year olds, in partnership with Council, health and voluntary sector partners. It is likely that the YOS will maintain a group work and supervisory presence in line with contextual safeguarding and other needs.
- 6.6 Voluntary sector substance misuse services from Each Brent and the Westminster Drug Project are located within the YOS. A wide range of provision is delivered to tackle the many problems associated with young people involved in drug related crime and / or suffering from the harmful consequences of drug and alcohol usage. This includes counselling, key working, group work and family support.
- 6.7 Two Early Help Family Support workers offer assistance to families affected by crime or criminality within their family. Support has a particular focus on the younger

siblings of young people who are criminally exploited or entrenched in criminal gangs and other criminal networks.

7.0 JOINT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- 7.1 Close alignment of work undertaken within the Children and Young People department has been instrumental in achieving positive outcomes. For example, a multi-disciplinary group of staff meet regularly to ensure that the accommodation and wider needs of young people due to be released from custody are identified early and planned for in a timely fashion. Managers also meet regularly to consider complex cases that require senior manager oversight and additional support.
- 7.2 A comprehensive joint working protocol between the YOS and children's social care services supports effective interventions relating to young people in police custody, the use of Appropriate Adults, remands to local authority accommodation and arrangements to support bail in the community.
- 7.3 All YOS staff have been trained to be Working with Families lead professionals (under the government funded Troubled Families Programme). Staff have also received Signs of Safety training and the approach has been adopted to support risk management in cases, and for staff supervision.
- 7.4 The YOS works closely with the police. There are three police officers based in the YOS. Procedures for jointly deciding and delivering all out of court disposal work are clearly outlined in an Out Of Court Disposal Joint Protocol. Key information sharing such as the provision of overnight arrests and police custody details is provided on a daily basis.
- 7.5 The YOS has developed close strategic and operational links with CAMHS. A Liaison and Diversion Officer offers mental health screening to all young people in police custody. A seconded CAMHS practitioner assesses and supports young people subject to court orders who have mental health needs.
- 7.6 The YOS works closely with Council's Community Protection services. Information and intelligence sharing, including safety mapping, gangs information and other contextual safeguarding work is a key element in managing safety and the public protection risks.
- 7.7 The Violence and Vulnerability Programme (VVP) focuses on reducing re-offending and serious youth violence through a coordinated, multi-agency and intelligence led approach. This includes a specific focus on a cohort not yet known to statutory services, increasing earlier intervention and identification of an unknown potentially younger cohort. The programme consists of prolific offenders, weapon carriers, domestic abuse perpetrators and those affiliated, or at risk of affiliation, with gangs. Brent YOS attends VVP meetings and identify, monitor, divert, disrupt and enforce those on the cohort through facilitating information sharing and ensuring that the most appropriate interventions are in place.
- 7.8 The YOS Risk and Safety and Wellbeing Risk Management Forum is a partnership meeting that provides oversight of YOS children and young people assessed as high and very high risk of serious harm or safety and well-being. The overarching aim of all work of the group is to prevent children and young people from committing serious harm or further offences. The group shares relevant information and reviews risk management plans. There are clear referral pathways to other

partnership risk forums including VVP, Integrated Offender Management and MAPPA Level 2 and 3.

7.9 The YOS attends daily Integrated Risk Management meetings. This is a police led panel that provides immediate risk management in response to incidents involving young people that have recently occurred – usually within the last 24 hours.

8.0 FINANCE

8.1 Additional resources have been enabled by the Community Safety Team to address the acute pressure affecting OOC work. This was possible due to an increase in MOPAC funding and the decommissioning of a council programme. It will provide funding for the next two financial years.

8.2 Partners, via the Management Board, will be asked to commit resources in the form of diversionary activities. This provision is needed to broaden the offer as required by HMIP.

8.3 Total budgets for the last three financial years, and the budget proposed for 2020/21 are provided in the following table:

Year	Total Amount
2016/2017	£1,332,714
2017/2018	£1,184,931
2018/2019	£1,361,913
2019/2020	£1,336,851

9.0 LEGAL

9.1 Formation of Local Youth Offending Teams: The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority in England and Wales to deliver youth justice services in line with a statutory framework that outlines YOS responsibilities in relation to out of Court disposals, Court work, bail and remand, the assessment of young people who offend, the provision of Court reports, the delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement.

9.2 National Standards Governing Youth Justice in define the minimum required level of service provision. They are set by the Secretary of State for Justice on advice from the YJB. They cover a range of different areas of practice and are designed to assist public protection, safeguard children and young people, and ensure the delivery of effective services.

10.0 EQUALITIES

10.1 There are patterns of over representation in the 153 young people known to Brent's YOS between April 2019 and January 2020 for the following ethnicities as categorised by the DfE: Any Other Black Background, Any Other Ethnic Group and Black Caribbean heritage.

10.2 Quarterly reports provided to the YOS Management Board include information on ethnicity data to ensure senior management and partnership oversight. The YOS disproportionality live tracker tool allows all YOS in England to compare their level

of disproportionality with that of other areas. This toolkit was originally made available to all Youth Offending Services in 2015, and newer versions were provided with updated data in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The tracker evidences professional understanding of need and disproportionality and is used to inform commissioning decisions and discussions with other stakeholders, including the police, courts and community safety partnerships. Current actions being undertaken in response to the data identified in the tracker include:

- Improving data recording and analysis to identify disproportionality at an early stage, to inform Brent's Early Help offer and the development of Family Well-being Centres, the contextual safeguarding approach with vulnerable adolescents and the emerging approach to reduce serious youth violence.
- Establishment of a youth justice service focus group of BAME parents within the Brent YOS to explore issues and provide insight and support
- Continuing the rollout of Trauma Informed practice training
- Introduction of the 'Turning Point' project by the Metropolitan Police Service in Brent for Brent young people known to YOS, in partnership with the Police.
- Brent Youth Parliament undertook an engagement and planning session in March 2019 to inform the Brent Council Knife Crime Strategy Action Plan. The session was facilitated by United Borders and identified the development of positive peer relationships and positive media presence as priorities for the plan. The Blueprint Collective, working with Vice as part of the London Borough of Culture, are developing opportunities for Brent young people to promote positive role models throughout 2020, with a focus on priority groups.

11.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

11.1 The Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care took part in the inspection process, meeting with the inspection team and providing details of how borough priorities placed high importance in supporting the work of the YOS.

12.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

12.1 N/A

Related Document:

[2019 Report: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation \(HMIP\) Inspection of Youth Offending Services in Brent](#)

Report sign off:

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Children and Young People