

	Council 19 September 2024
	Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools (Councillor Gwen Grahl)
Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25
Background Papers:	Youth justice plans: guidance for youth justice services. Updated 19 March 2024 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-justice-plans-guidance-for-youth-justice-services/youth-justice-plans-guidance-for-youth-justice-services
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Palvinder Kudhail Director, Early Help and Social Care Palvinder.kudhail@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit, to the Youth Justice Board (YJB), an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Updated guidance to youth justice services, first published in March 2023, and updated in March 2024, confirmed that plans must be signed off by full council in accordance with Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.
- 1.2 This report explains the rationale for creating the Brent Youth Justice Plan (BYJP) 2024/25 which includes an overview of local youth justice progress and priorities and arrangements for monitoring performance.

- 1.3 In line with agreed regulations, the plan was submitted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in July 2024, with the approval of the Board Chair. An updated version of the Plan will be submitted after it has been signed off by Full Council.
- 1.4 Sign off by the Chair of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) Management Board indicates that the YJS Management Board have approved all sections outlined in the BYJP 2024/25.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Council is asked to approve (following its consideration and referral by Cabinet on 9 September 2024) formal sign off and adoption of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024-25 as detailed within Appendix A of the report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to the Borough Plan and Strategic Priorities

3.1.1 The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 demonstrates the commitment and achievements of our Youth Justice Service (YJS) and the wider partnership to support children and young people who are at risk of or have entered the youth justice system. Performance remains strong overall, particularly in respect of the low number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time, as well as the number of young people in custody. This is due to the strong focus on prevention and engagement with children and young people so that their views are heard and interventions personalised to their needs and environment. Young people involved in drug related offences and children and young people involved in criminal exploitation/gang activity has been declining year on year. The use of peer mapping tools to better understand the nature of the activity that is influencing children and young people as well as trauma informed and restorative approaches are used to ensure that the most appropriate interventions are put in place. Work on reducing the disproportionate number of young people in the criminal justice system from Black backgrounds continues with rigour and pace.

3.1.2 Feedback from young people through surveys and individual engagement has been encouraging with some comments from parents and children highlighted below:

- *'I learnt a lot more awareness and safety tips - I would like to continue with these meetings so I can get a more detailed understanding about our children today. Overall, the meeting was a blessing because I came out knowing more than I did going in'* – workshop attended by a parent.
- *'I have learnt a lot of things from these offences. I've learnt that I should go down the right path. I should walk the other way and ignore negative friends,'* A young person.
- *'I completed the Victim Awareness Group, and I liked the people doing the group, they were nice. I also learned different ways victims are impacted.'* A young person

- *'I thought they (panel members) were fair, and they were engaged. What I liked was that they came across as though they really care. They were not judgemental, and we didn't feel judged. They came across as extremely supportive.'* A parent

3.1.3 New relationships have been formed within the partnership, including with the Raheem Sterling Foundation and Word 4 Weapons, resulting in amnesty knife bins installed across the borough to promote community safety and encourage young people to anonymously dispose of knives.

3.1.4 The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is closely aligned to three priorities within the Borough Plan 2023-27:

Thriving Communities

Brent Youth Justice Service (YJS) is working closely with community partners to make Brent safer. This includes delivering *Your Life You Choose*, and other preventative workshops in schools in partnership with the Accelerated Support Team (Early Help), Willesden Magistrates Court, the Police, and the local voluntary sector. *Unlocking Your Potential* groupwork sessions led by YJS introduce young people to inspirational members from local and wider London communities. YJS also supports young people to access positive recreational activities at Family Wellbeing Centres.

The Best Start in Life

Young people within the Brent Youth justice system are seen and heard. A trauma informed approach to supporting children is embedded within YJS. Supported by a YJS Participation Officer, children and young people communicate with members of the YJS Management Board via a range of multi-media platforms including podcasts and short films. Joint work undertaken with the Brent Community Safety Team includes exploring options for broadening Brent's mentoring offer to young people affected by gangs and other forms of criminal exploitation, and the ongoing provision of early intervention preventative support to children and young people who receive police issued Triage Out of Court Disposals.

A Healthier Brent

Young people known to criminal justice services often have poor access to mental health provision. An NHS funded Youth Liaison and Diversion Officer, based within the YJS offers mental health screening to children who attend police custody. A co-located CAMHS Mental Health Practitioner offers a range of support and refers those with more complex needs for specialist CAMHS support. Children with substance misuse needs are supported by commissioned service providers VIA and EACH Counselling Services.

3.1.5 **Brent Youth Strategy**

The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is aligned to the current Brent Youth Strategy which includes youth participation, contextual safeguarding risk management, and the provision of educational support to children not in employment, education, and training.

3.1.6 The Brent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2028

Brent YJS is committed to tackling inequalities. The service's work is closely aligned to two objectives within the Brent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2028:

Objective 2: Narrowing the Gap: Tackling Inequalities

The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 details how Brent YJS monitors inequalities within the Brent youth justice system. This includes work undertaken to reduce the overrepresentation of children from Black Heritage groups (pp.45-53).

Objective 3: Establishing an Inclusive Workforce

Brent YJS Plan has an inclusive and diverse workforce. This is outlined in the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 (p.62).

3.1.7 Safer Brent Community Safety Strategy 2024-26

The Brent Youth Justice Service Management Board is responsible for delivering Roundtable Discussions within Priority 1 of the Safer Brent Partnership Overarching Action Plan 2024-26: *Tackling violent crime with a specific focus on knife crime*. Due to commence in autumn 2024, the meetings seek to enhance the understanding of crime and exploitation in Brent through discussion with children and young people known to Brent YJS.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The Brent Youth Justice Service is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency service that works with children and young people aged 10-17 years and their families. Brent YJS provides support in relation to out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, the assessment of children and young people who offend, the provision of court reports, the planning and delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement. The YJS sits within the Children and Young People's (CYP) Directorate and is managed by the Head of Early Help.

3.2.2 The CYP Director of Early Help and Social Care chairs the YJS Management Board. The Board meets quarterly and has representation across the partnership at senior levels.

3.2.3 The YJS Management Board provides strategic direction and support for the YJS. This includes monitoring progress to ensure the effective delivery of youth justice services that aim to reduce re-offending and safeguard children and young people.

3.2.4 A summary of the achievements and ambitions detailed within the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is outlined in View from the Chair of the YJS Management Board – ‘Our continuous drive to be the best we can be’ (pp.2-8).

3.2.5 The principal aims and commitments that will shape the Brent YJS partnership are outlined in the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 (pp.56-57). These include:

- Tackling the over representation of children from Black heritage groups in the Brent youth justice system.
- Collaborating with children’s social care services to reduce the criminalisation of children in care and care leavers.
- Continuing to promote evidence-based Child First approaches as the best means to reducing victims, promoting public protection, keeping communities safe and supporting children towards positive outcomes.
- Developing pathways and creating access for speech and language therapy.
- Maintaining and developing new partnerships with the community and voluntary sector.
- Expanding participation and youth coproduction capabilities.
- Continuing to build a YJS partnership culture that encourages diversity in its workforce and in its thinking; is inclusive and supportive, encourages personal responsibility and is delivery focused.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Members of the Youth Justice Service Management Board were involved in the drafting of the Youth Justice Plan 2023/24. During the Board’s meeting on the 25 July 2024, a final draft was agreed by the Board ready for submission to Full Council.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 In 2023/24 the YJB introduced a new funding condition, requiring Youth Justice Plans to receive Full Council sign off.

5.2 The YJB Partnership gross budget for the 2024/25 financial year is a total of £1.6m. This is made up of a net contribution of £0.803m from the Council’s general fund, £0.577m from the YJB grant, £0.114m from Brent Schools via the Dedicated Schools Grant and £0.050m MOPAC and the National Probation service. There are also in-kind partnership contributions amounting to £0.270m from the Police, Health, and National Probation Service. In-year commitments would need to remain within these allocated funds.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a requirement that all local authorities must establish a Youth Offending Team (YOT) comprising members from the police, social services, probation, health and education. Most local

authorities, including Brent, have renamed YOT provision as Youth Justice Services.

6.2 The Act also created the Youth Justice Board to oversee and monitor youth justice services in England and Wales. One of the YJB's key functions is to provide local authorities with funding to enable YOTs to deliver statutory services.

6.3 Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on local authorities to submit an annual youth justice plan.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 The proposed Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 supports Brent Council's commitment to equality equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is also consistent with the statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. Brent YJS considers all individuals when conducting their day-to-day work. This includes YJS Management Board oversight of YJS work to reduce the overrepresentation of children from Black Heritage groups in the youth justice system, child-centred operational policies, and a commitment to trauma informed work practices.

7.2 Brent YJS seeks to reduce health inequalities through the provision of good assessment and intervention planning for all children who enter the local youth justice system. This includes referral to substance misuse services, CAMHS, and CNWL mental health screening,

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan details efforts to encourage young people within the youth justice system to share their views and opinions on issues of most relevance to them.

8.2 Youth participation and co-production is an evolving initiative within the Youth Justice Service. This work is aligned to the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030, which aims to equip children and young people with the skills and opportunities needed to take action to protect the environment and tackle climate change.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 N/A

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan will be shared with all services and organisations represented on the Youth Justice Service Management Board.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director of Children and Young People