



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMISSION 19 JUNE 2007

Report of the Corporate Director for Children and Young People

Reducing Offending by Children Looked After

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To mark the progress of partner agencies in working with Looked After Children and Young People (10 – 17 years) within Derby city. This is a summary of work undertaken to reduce offending within this targeted vulnerable group.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 Data

PAF C18:

- Based upon figures submitted to the DFES in October 2006 (via the OC2 Return), the percentage of children looked after aged 10 or over subject to a conviction, final warning or reprimand in Derby was 6.7%.
- Derby has shown continuous improvement against this performance measure for the past 3 years and currently compares to a 'National Average' of 9.6% and a 'Statistical Neighbour' average of 11%.
- Further, Derby is the best performing authority against this measure within its comparator group. (See Appendix 1).

Overall numbers of children looked after offending in Derby:

- Figures for the quarter January-March 2007 show an encouraging fall compared to the same data period in the previous year. The overall percentage has fallen from 10.9% to 6.7%.

2.2 Policy Context

The Youth Offending Service and Children and Young People's Department are working in partnership to ensure that in Derby we benefit from the outcomes of the Green Paper on LAC (Care Matters, 2006), and in particular measures intended to prevent the inappropriate acceleration of LAC through the youth justice system. These measures include:

- Training for staff working with these vulnerable groups in restorative justice approaches to managing conflict.
- The setting up of local arrangements to ensure that there are appropriate responses to incidents in children's homes.
- More joined-up service for looked-after children who go into custody.
- Working with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to ensure looked after young people receive an appropriate, joined-up service through the courts.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- 3.1 Two of the five key outcomes identified by the Children Act 2004 as being central to the re-configuration of Children's Services may be seen as being central to the work of Children's Services and the Youth Offending Service in relation to Looked After Children, namely:
- Staying Safe - i.e. helping children to be safe from bullying and discrimination and from crime and anti-social behaviour amongst other things
 - Making a Positive Contribution – i.e. helping children and young people to engage in law abiding and positive behaviour and to refrain from discriminatory and bullying behaviour towards others.
- 3.2 The need for Children's Services and YOS to work in partnership at a strategic level and operationally is fully recognised by both agencies. Thus, the LAC Strategic Group contains several senior managers from both services, whilst the YOS/LAC operational group includes service managers from the two services.
- 3.3 The primary aims of the LAC Strategic Group are to ensure that the five outcome indicators are addressed at a strategic level by the different agencies involved in the Group, and to identify ways of "working through" any blockages to progress which exist/may arise.
- 3.4 The YOS/LAC Operational Group was responsible for developing a diversion from Offending Action Plan in 2003. This contains a series of actions for YOS and Social Care staff, geared towards diverting Looked After Children from offending.
- 3.5 Members of this Group have worked together to ensure that Children Looked After are routinely referred and prioritised for inclusion in targeted prevention programmes to address their specific individual needs.
- 3.6 Similarly, managers for the two services have agreed joint assessment processes, agreed levels of intervention by the respective services and a joined up partnership approach to the delivery of care/supervision plans.
- 3.7 This Group has also facilitated the delivery of training for staff working in the respective agencies, as well as a systematic review of the way which social care and YOS staff work with young people in residential care in relation to conflict resolution, alternative approaches to the resolution of minor incidents and restorative justice.
- 3.8 During the last 12 months, all activity has been enhanced by improvements in data collection and sharing between the two agencies. It is now possible for accurate information to be shared on a monthly basis, and for such information to be utilised to positive effect at an operational level, as well as in the management of the performance of staff in the two agencies.
- 3.9 The performance of staff and partnership working are also managed by the Head of Service (Assessment and Care Planning)'s systematic review of the Care Plans of Looked After Children. Thus, with regard to those Looked After young people who are at risk of offending/re-offending the Head of Service ensures that their

Care Plans contain actions by Social Care and YOS staff to minimise the likelihood of such behaviour.

Priorities 2007 – 08

- 4.1 Review arrangements for engaging at strategic and operational levels, following changes in key personnel, and in the light of the imminent establishment of specialist Children Looked After teams in Children's Services.
- 4.2 Review Diversion from Offending Action Plan for Looked After Children in the light of the provisions of the Children Act 2004 and the Care Matters 2006 Agenda.
- 4.3 Continued partnership work between Youth Offending Service and Children and Young People's Department to reduce the numbers of looked after young people inappropriately entering the young justice system and receiving inequitable outcomes.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Percentage of Looked After Children Convicted or Have a Final Warning or Reprimand as at 30 September 2006

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None.

Legal

- 2.1 The development and inter-departmental guidance “Establishing Youth Offending Teams” published in December 1998, amplified the provisions of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and was jointly issued by the Home Office, Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), Department of Health (DoH) and the Welsh Office. The establishment of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) has been largely informed by the implementation of this guidance.
- 2.2 YOTs occupy a unique place within the local service environment. They straddle two major policy areas, being part of the Criminal Justice System and also part of local services for children and families. The statutory aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children and young people.

Personnel

3. The Youth Offending Service’s response to children looked after are drawn from existing partnership resources of the participating statutory agencies – Children’s Services, Health, Police and Probation.

Equalities impact

4. The vulnerability of Looked After Children requires a targeted approach and practice guidance both of which are in place.

Corporate Priorities

5. This report comes under the Council’s priorities for 2007-10:
 - **Helping us all to be healthy, active and independent** including **improving the health and well-being of our communities** and **responding quickly and effectively to the needs of children and young people**
 - **Making us proud of our neighbourhoods** by **reducing crime and anti-social behaviour**

