

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
31st October 2007
NORTH YORKSHIRE YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM (YOT)

Purpose of Report

- 1.0 To report on progress against the Youth Offending Team Inspection Action Plan.

Background

- 2.0 North Yorkshire Youth Offending Team (YOT) was subject last year to a Joint Inspection led by HMI Probation. The findings of this Inspection were published in a report on 22nd December 2006, and in March 2007, HMI Probation approved the YOT Inspection Action Plan.
- 2.1 Members will recall that the Inspection focused on 5 core areas of work:
- Management and partnership arrangements, including the role and function of the YOT Management Board
 - Work in the Courts
 - Work with children and young people in the community
 - Work with children and young people subject to Detention Training Orders
 - Victims and restorative justice
- 2.2 The scoring in all areas was 2, which judged the YOT as 'Adequate – only meeting minimum requirements'.
- 2.3 The YOT Action Plan addresses the key recommendations arising from the Inspection. Responsibility for monitoring progress against the Plan rests with the Youth Justice Board Regional Manager. Within NYCC, progress is monitored quarterly by the YOT Management Board, chaired by John Marsden, Chief Executive.

Achievements

- 3.0 Excellent progress has been achieved against the majority of recommendations set out in the Plan. Actions are sub-divided into those required of the YOT Management Board, those which the YOT must deliver against, and actions which primarily rest with partner organisations.

3.1 It is not my intention to address all the issues covered in the attached Action Plan, but to highlight some of the focussed activity which has taken place over recent months:

3.2 Reparation

The lack of reparation and restorative justice was a recurring theme in the Inspection Report. Growth funding this financial year has enabled the appointment of two Reparation Development Officers (RDOs) and two Volunteer Co-ordinators (VCOs) to cover the county, and these have been in post since late July. RDOs are reviewing current reparation projects and will ensure the development of a range of new projects across the county, establishing a minimum of 1 project in each Borough by November, ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken and policies and procedures are in place. It is the role of VCOs to recruit, train and supervise volunteers to support the projects, in addition to establishing a pool of volunteers to act as Appropriate Adults and Referral Panel Members.

Meanwhile, a small number of reparation projects have been established, including an excellent project in partnership with Youth Clubs North Yorkshire at Carlton Lodge, Thirsk where young people have been clearing a disabled access around the lake and working in the residential unit.

Along with colleagues from Childrens Social Care and Police, a number of YOT staff recently attended an excellent training event on restorative practice. There is a commitment within NYCC to develop this further, particularly within children's residential units and also as part of Safer Schools Partnerships led by Police.

3.3 Education, Training and Employment

Additional funding in April 2007 enabled the appointment of a Practice Manager (ETE) to take a strategic lead in partnership with Education and Connexions colleagues to progress the range of related recommendations outlined in the Plan. A draft ETE strategy to improve performance and service delivery was approved by the YOT Management Board in July. Unfortunately, the PM (ETE) post is now vacant and uncertainty around future funding has meant we are unable to re-recruit. However, a multi-agency working group has been established and progress is being steadily maintained.

3.4 Workforce Development

This financial year, the YOT has for the first time, had access to a training budget. This has enabled us to address a number of requirements highlighted by Inspectors. The CYPS Induction package has been reviewed to incorporate specific requirements for YOT staff, including core skills and competencies for working with children and young people. Induction is consistently applied and links to the NYCC probationary requirements.

All managers and core staff have received training in respect of Asset (including Risk Asset), Pre Sentence Report writing, Supervision planning, and Court Skills. Training has been scheduled over the autumn to include Safeguarding issues, developing participation with young people, and homelessness legislation. All managers are being trained in Appraisals, Safer Recruitment and Selection, Attendance Management, and Resolving Issues at Work as part of a county-wide programme seeking to ensure that front-line managers are equipped with necessary skills and core competencies.

Areas for Development

- 4.0 Some recommendations and actions will be achieved in a longer timeframe and some, whilst the YOT can influence, may be dependant on service delivery out with the YOT's control such as ETE, accommodation, or CAMHS provision.
- 4.1 An area which has been slow to progress due to the lack of a Policy Officer in the YOT has been the development of Service Level Agreements (SLAs), procedures and policies. However, SLAs are now in place with Education, Children's Social Care and Health, and in respect of Police and Probation, are in draft pending approval. Children's Social Care have recently agreed to offer some Policy Officer support to progress any policies and procedures outstanding, and a YOT Safeguarding policy and procedure has been written, presented to the Local Safeguarding Board Procedures Sub-group, and all staff are receiving training throughout October and November.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

Comment on the information contained within this report.



Lesley Ingleson
Youth Offending Team Manager

Date: 2nd October 2007

Background Papers: North Yorkshire Youth Offending Team Inspection Action Plan