



A Partnership between Bedfordshire Police, Luton Borough Council, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, Luton Health & Wellbeing Board & the National Probation Service

Luton Youth Offending Service Information for Professionals

Statutory Aim of the Service

To prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people aged under 18 years of age in Luton. When working with children, young people and their families the service adopts a 'whole family' approach.

Context

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 placed local authorities under a duty to develop strategies for the reduction of crime and disorder. Each local authority must ensure that appropriate youth justice services are in place through the setting up of a Youth Offending Service (YOS). The Police, Probation and Health are required to co-operate with the Local Authority to ensure such services are available. Youth Offending Services are not envisaged as belonging to any one department or agency. The initial guidance outlined the expectation that all statutory partner agencies were expected to participate fully, with the local authority Chief Executive expected to take the lead, in ensuring youth justice services outlined in section 38 (4) of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 are delivered.

Youth Offending Service's have a duty to co-operate with a number of other agencies and bodies – for example:

- Under section 325 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003: YOSs are one of the named 'duty to co-operate' bodies within Multi Agency Public Protection arrangements (MAPPA).
- Under section 10(4) of the Children Act 2004, the YOS is under a duty to cooperate with children's services in making arrangements to improve the wellbeing of children in the authority.
- Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/90) state that the YOS is under a duty to co-operate in the establishment and operation of the local LSCB
- The Child Poverty Act (2010) identifies the YOS as a 'partner authority'. As such it must make arrangements to 'promote cooperation' between authorities with a view to 'reducing and mitigating the effects of' child poverty'. The YOS should also be consulted in the development of strategies.
- Code of practice for Victims of Crime - YOSs have a statutory duty to comply with this Code. This requires YOSs to take victims' needs into account in general, but also reinforces youth justice National Standards re:
 - ensuring staff working with victims have appropriate training
 - contacting victims and allowing victims to make informed choices about involvement in restorative processes
 - keeping victims who participate in restorative justice informed about case progress

- storing victims' information
- The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 puts in place a flexible framework for partnership working between the Police and Crime Commissioner and their community safety and criminal justice partners. The criminal justice duty states that the Commissioner and criminal justice bodies in that police area, "must make arrangements (so far as it is appropriate to do so) for the exercise of functions so as to provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system for the police area." The criminal justice bodies included within this duty are Police, Prosecution, Courts, Youth Offending Services, Prisons and Probation.

In Luton the service is hosted by the local authority within the Children and Learning Department. Each statutory agency second members of staff and there is a pooled budget which also finances a significant number of staff. The service cannot be an employer in its own right and therefore any staff financed by the pooled budget are employed via the local authority.

Data held by the YOS belongs to the YOS and not to the local authority or other partner. This is determined by legislation where the service is a separate legal entity in its own right with the Head of Service registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.

The service publishes an annual Youth Justice Plan for Luton and is recognised and respected nationally as a high performing service

Governance

The governance of the service lies with the multi agency partnership Chief Officer Board. The Board meets at least quarterly and consists of Chief Officers or very senior managers of the statutory partners in addition to others and is responsible for supporting and holding the Head of Service to account on all aspects of service provision.

An interdepartmental circular, issued by the Home Office, Department of Health, Welsh Office and Department for Education and Employment, on Establishing Youth Offending Services (22.12.98), outlined the rationale for a Chief Officer Board. It states that each area covered by a Youth Offending Service should establish a strategic management board comprising the local authority chief executive, the chief officers for social care, education, police, probation and health plus any others (e.g. Clerk to the Justices, local authority housing) felt to be appropriate.

The circular suggests that where a Youth Offending Service covers only part of an area served by a police force, probation and/or health, the chief officers concerned may wish to ask their senior officers responsible for that area to represent them at the group. However where the chief officer is not a member of the group it will be essential that those asked to serve on the management Board have the authority and skills to negotiate with other services on matters concerning the Youth Offending Service (including resource allocation) without having to refer back continually to their chief officer. Other members of the Board should be of a similar senior level in all the partner agencies.

The Management Board should:

- Manage the performance of the prevention of youth crime agenda and ensure the delivery of the statutory principal aim (to prevent offending and re-offending by those under 18 years) at local level
- Assume corporate ownership of preventing and tackling youth crime

- Ensure proper accountability arrangements for, and oversight of, the operation of the YOS partnership
- Oversee the appointment and designation of a Head of Youth Offending Service;
- Require the Head of Youth Offending Service and his/her staff to provide regular performance reports on YOS progress against YJB performance, outcome data as well as any local targets
- Ensure delivery of the local strategic plan for youth justice
- Ensure YOS staff receive appropriate training and development opportunities to address any competence deficits identified.
- Ensure a significant proportion of total staff from the statutory agencies remain in the YOS to form a core staff group
- Ensure the YOS is adequately resourced with equitable contributions from all partner agencies included in the pooled budget
- Ensure children and young people with whom the YOS works have access to appropriate mainstream services
- Ensure the YOS provides and receives maximum operational intelligence to and from the partners in their work
- Ensure the YOS's infrastructure needs are addressed

In addition to the statutory partners each youth offending service may have other agencies on their Management Board/Chief Officer Group which can differ from area to area. For example in Luton YOS Victim Support, local authority housing, Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service, Luton Drug and Alcohol Partnership, Her Majesty's Court Service and Luton Community Safety Partnership (SoLUTiONs) are all involved in the Luton YOS Partnership.

The service is a member of a number of other partnerships within their area including:

- Luton Community Safety Partnership (soLUTiONs)
- Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board
- Luton Safeguarding Children Board
- Luton Children's Trust Board
- Luton Early Intervention Board
- Bedfordshire Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Board
- Bedfordshire Channel Panel
- Luton Early Intervention Board
- Luton Borough Council Corporate Parenting Board
- Bedfordshire Integrated Offender Governance Board
- Luton Borough Council's Community Cohesion Planning Group (CCCPG)
- Bedfordshire Missing Children Panel
- Bedfordshire Child Sexual Exploitation Panel (CSEP)
- Bedfordshire Demand Reduction Board

Inspection Programme

HM Inspectorate of Probation is an independent Inspectorate, funded by the Ministry of Justice, and reporting directly to the Secretary of State on the effectiveness of work with adults, children and young people who have offended aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public. HMI Probation



carries out inspection work of youth offending services, on a joint basis with other inspectorates such as Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC), and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Funding

Section 39(5) of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 stipulates that membership of a YOS must include at least one of the following;

- A Probation Officer
- A Social Worker of the local authority
- A Police Officer
- A person nominated by the local Clinical Commissioning Group (formally Primary Care Trust)
- A person of the local authority with experience in education

The cash budget is made up of statutory contributions from partners as well as various government grants and other funding sources.

What Services Do We Provide?

The Youth Offending Service is well placed to provide a range of services to children, young people and their families. There is no minimum age though most referrals involve families with children aged above 7 years through to and including 17 years. Whilst referrals are based around an individual child or young person, the service aims to provide a 'whole family' integrated approach. We have the benefit of staff from many disciplines working together, and with other agencies, to assess and intervene with families. Disciplines within the service include Youth Justice Officers, Probation Officer, education, training and employment specialists, police, restorative justice workers, and health workers specialising in drugs and alcohol, physical health, mental health, speech and language. We also have workers skilled in working with parents and have workers able to work very intensively with families where that need is identified. The Centre for Social Justice describes the family environment as generally a 'key factor' in children's offending behaviour, therefore 'their criminality is unlikely to be effectively addressed in isolation from family considerations'. We recognise that to achieve best outcomes for children, young people, families, victims and the wider community we need to intervene to meet the needs of the whole family. Luton Youth Offending Service has a lot of experience and knowledge as a multi agency and multi disciplinary service working holistically in this way for many years and gaining the confidence and involvement of the families we work with. Sanctions will be used in suitable circumstances, dependent on the nature of the intervention, but our aim is to work alongside families to achieve strong sustainable outcomes. Each family has a case manager within the service who is responsible for the coordination of all intervention work.

We have a history of many years successfully working with families on a voluntary basis through our previous venture 'Project Turnaround' in collaboration with Nacro. Though this project no longer exists the work with families is still undertaken within the main service.

We manage all statutory criminal orders made by the courts on under 18s resident in Luton.

In addition the service undertakes direct work with the victims of crime perpetrated by the young people known to the service which may include the provision of information, referral to support services as well as indirect and direct restorative justice provision including restorative conferencing.



We are in the process of developing a much closer working partnership with the University of Bedfordshire who are already involved in an evaluation of our 'Weapons Awareness Programme' with a view to having more of our work and interventions evaluated.

Examples of services provided:

- Prevention and early intervention work where children and young people are identified to be at risk of anti social behaviour, offending, gang affiliation, and/or vulnerability to radicalised or extremist views. Referrals are normally made via the CAF process.
- Triage service at Luton Police Station to assess all children and young people brought into police custody; making joint decisions with the police regarding suitable outcomes to address the seriousness of the offending, the needs of the victim(s) and the needs of the child/young person. This will include informal and formal criminal disposals and the need for interventions from the YOS and/or other services.
- Interventions where a child/young person in the family has been given a formal police Caution or Conditional Caution. These are normally low level offences where prosecution is not deemed appropriate
- Interventions where a child/young person in the family has been remanded to the youth justice secure estate awaiting trial or where the Courts have asked us to intervene whilst the child/young person is subject to court bail.
- Interventions where a child/young person in the family has been made subject to a criminal court order by any of the criminal courts including sentences in the community and in the youth justice secure estate.
- Services to Luton and South Bedfordshire Youth Court and to Luton Crown Court and other criminal courts to provide information to Justices, Crown Prosecution Service lawyers and defence lawyers to assist them in the court process and decision making.
- Services to all identifiable victims (personal or corporate) of children and young people known to the service. This may include the provision of information, shuttle mediation and/or full restorative conferencing. The service works to the Restorative Justice Council (RJC) Codes of Practice and is currently going through an Accreditation process with the RJC.
- Reparation, also known as unpaid work, where children and young people will be involved in local projects or undertake work in order to make some recompense to the local community for the harm they have caused.

With both statutory and voluntary interventions various approaches with families are utilised depending on assessment and resulting tailored intervention plans. Methods include one to one, group work, intensive family work, family group conferencing, restorative approaches, evidence led approaches, surveillance monitoring (statutory orders only) etc.

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