

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 10TH FEBRUARY 2011

REPORT ON: RE-DESIGN OF ADOLESCENT SERVICES IN DUNDEE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 78 - 2011

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines how the Social Work Department proposes to re-configure and re-focus its services to adolescents in order to ensure resources and services are effectively targeted in line with the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- 1.2 Additional proposals in relation to the introduction of an intensive family support service for families will be brought forward to Committee; this will enhance services to vulnerable families at evenings and weekends.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee approves the following recommendations;

- 2.1 The remits of the Rowans Team, Community Support Team and Intensive Support and Monitoring Service (ISMS) are changed to create a Community Adolescent Team (CAT) which has case holding responsibility. The teams would be reduced from a current total staffing establishment of 14.5 staff to 7.5 staff. This would make best use of professional resources, increase the overall resilience of services and enable a consistent focus on adolescents who experience or present high levels of risk by virtue of their exposure to or involvement in risk taking or offending behaviour.
- 2.2 The 2 Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Social Workers who are currently placed in a locality team join the new CAT. They would continue to specialise in cases active to the NHS CAMHS service and although this will not involve a financial saving, it will increase the range of expertise available to address the most complex adolescent issues. Their current caseloads, consisting mostly of adolescent cases, would transfer with them.
- 2.3 The disestablishment of the Youth Justice Coordinator and admin support and re-deployment of the current post holders into equivalent posts which reflect their experience and skills. Functional leads in relation to Youth Justice will be retained, either by the current post holder and/or by other staff at equivalent grades. The emphasis on retaining successful youth justice partnerships, forums and processes will be retained.
- 2.4 Responsibility for young people on Court Orders will lie with Criminal Justice Services from age 16 years for those who are not subject to supervision through the Children's Hearing system.
- 2.5 The reduction of contracts with SACRO to deliver Restorative Justice, with VOYCE to deliver support to victims of youth crime and anti-social behaviour and with Includem to deliver ISMS, in line with consistently reduced figures for youth crime in the City, an associated reduction in referral numbers and the principle of best value. There would be an emphasis on retaining an important focus on victims and community reassurance.
- 2.6 That the Director of Social Work progresses the staffing implications arising from this report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The combined total immediate saving in respect of the specific recommendations in this report to re-configure and re-focus Social Work services and reduced contracts would be £530,000. Services would be targeted more consistently at high risk cases, the hope being that this will result in longer-term savings associated with reduced external placements, including secure admissions.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Introduction

Currently, there are a range of Social Work services whose remit is to either wholly or partially work with adolescents. They include the Choice Project, which works with young offenders on statutory supervision through Children's Hearings and in some instances, the Court; the Community Support Team, which offers planned evening and weekend support to families of children of all ages from 0-16 years; the Rowans Team, which works with young people at risk of being accommodated; and ISMS, which works with young people who are deemed to be at risk of secure accommodation. A number of young offenders are also supervised on statutory Court Orders by Social Workers within Criminal Justice Services.

The Rowans, Community Support Team and ISMS do not have case responsibility and work in conjunction with staff in the locality teams and there is potentially a duplication of effort across the City. Given that a high number of staff within these Teams are social work qualified, it is no longer felt that this approach is making best use of professional staff, particularly as higher numbers of adolescents are becoming looked after often on an emergency basis in external placements. There were 23 such admissions in 2009-2010 with an estimated 220 adolescents supervised by locality teams across the City.

Whilst the referral source and/or legal status of the child or young person receiving support from one of these teams may differ, they typically present with very similar needs. The knowledge, skills and ethos required to address those needs are also the same and could be collectively developed by the creation of one Community Adolescent Team (CAT). This team would focus on young people aged 12-16 years whose behaviour presents as being out with adult control but who are not engaging in offending. The highest risk locality cases would be transferred to this team to help ensure the young people are supported holistically and intensively by dedicated workers. The addition of the 2 CAMHS workers would promote a broader skills base and more integrated approach.

This development would enable the locality teams to focus on work with younger children. In addition work in relation to the scope of the Family Support Teams is underway to ensure provision is made for the most vulnerable of families in the evenings and at weekends and more detailed proposals for the development of such a service will be brought to Committee. Members will also be aware that Out of Hours Social Work Services have been restructured (Report No 592-2010). As part of this additional funding (£20,000) has been made available from Child Protection monies included in 2010/11 Social Work budget to enhance service delivery to children where the child protection plan identifies a need for visits outwith normal working hours, often at weekends. This function has previously been undertaken by staff from the Community Support Team as part of a range of duties and staff from Out of Hours. Focusing this element of work with the Out Of Hours Service will enable the development of a more consistent approach.

The redeployment of affected staff would be undertaken in consultation with Personnel and the Unions.

4.2 Currently, a number of young people within the Criminal Justice System are supervised by the Choice Team. Typically, these are young people with multiple needs who have been previously looked after and are placed on Probation Orders at a young age. However, it is important to note that not all young people who appear before the Court are dealt with by the Choice Team, for example young people who are placed on Community Service or Supervised Attendance Orders are supervised by social work staff within Criminal Justice Services. Changes brought about by the Criminal Justice and Licensing Bill will come into effect in February 2011 and will radically change the way in which offenders are supervised in the community by introducing a new Community Payback Order (CPO) which will replace Probation, Community Service and Supervised Attendance Orders. Revised national standards are also being implemented.

In future young offenders required to undertake unpaid work by the Court will also be required to undertake a period of supervision aimed at reducing the likelihood of reoffending. In order to accommodate these changes, it is proposed that responsibility for young offenders who are over the age of 16 years who are being dealt with by the Court and who are not already subject to supervision should move to Criminal Justice Services. This will allow the Choice Team, which has a proven track record in working with young

offenders, to focus more intensively on early adolescents and will enable staff within Criminal Justice to ensure the new CPO and associated national standards are introduced consistently. The intention within Criminal Justice is to introduce a more focused approach to young offenders which will ensure the specific needs of this younger age group can be addressed effectively.

It is also proposed that the singleton worker who has responsibility for assessing suitability for ISMS and for co-ordinating the allocation of additional support hours for ISMS is located within the Choice Team. Their responsibilities will be extended to include case holding responsibility.

4.3 In Dundee, youth crime has reduced considerably in recent years. The 2009-10 Annual report highlights the following:

- A reduction in the number of offences involving a young person under 16 or between the ages of 16-18 who remain on supervision by 15% from 2009-09 with a 41% decrease in detected youth crime since 2006-07
- A 30% reduction in volume/ persistent offender numbers from 47-33 in 2009-10, with a 70% reduction over the last six years
- A 29% reduction in the number of identified victims of youth crime in 2009-10, this is a 50% reduction since 2004-05
- A 34% reduction in police referrals to SCRA, this is a 74% reduction from 2003-04

These significant achievements are a testament to the excellent work of the Youth Justice Partnership (YJP), which has a number of innovative and nationally acclaimed forums and processes in place. Each of these reflects the national strategy on Preventing Offending by Young People covering Early and Effective Intervention, Prevention, High Risk, Victims and Performance Management. The work of the YJP also now forms part of the Integrated Children's Services (ICS) Plan. There is a well embedded infrastructure in place and a commitment to maintaining progress, with key leads being identified in an all encompassing and more detailed Youth Justice Plan.

Accordingly, it is proposed that the Youth Justice Coordinator post plus admin support are disestablished and that the post holders are re-deployed to equivalent posts. It will however be important that youth justice continues to be prioritised and in order to maintain important forums and processes, functional leads for all key aspects will be retained. This will include the preparation of an annual Youth Justice Plan for ongoing coordination and monitoring by the Youth Justice Partnership and implementation by partners.

4.4 The YJP has also developed and overseen 3 sizeable commissioned services for SACRO to deliver Restorative Justice (£195,000), VOYCE to deliver Victim Support (£63,000) to all victims of youth crime and Includem to deliver ISMS (£206,400). The contracts have been developed in consultation with partners and restorative justice in particular is a key aspect of the national strategy.

There is an associated target of offering a restorative option to 60% of identified young offenders in the current ICS Plan. However, as a reflection of falling youth crime, in 2008-09 and 2009-10 the levels of activity and unit costs were as follows:

Service 2008-09 Cases/Unit Costs

SACRO 145 referrals - £1,344

VOYCE 109 cases - £ 577

Service 2009-10 Cases/Unit Costs

SACRO 131 referrals - £1,488

VOYCE 64 cases - £ 984

The referrals to SACRO last year resulted in 81 young people actually participating in an intervention. Whilst customer feedback on the services is good, at a total of around 5 referrals and/or cases a week for both contracts combined there is clear scope to review existing contracts. In this instance, it is proposed that they are reduced by 32% involving a £62,400 saving on the SACRO contract and a £20,160 saving on the VOYCE contract.

Given the high and extremely expensive numbers of young people still being accommodated in external placements, it is proposed to retain the majority of the ISMS Includem contract at this stage. This would provide intensive, extra support, especially during out-of-hours periods when the young people are most at risk. It is proposed to reduce this contract by 10%, involving a saving of £20,640.

4.5 In accordance with Getting it Right for Every Child, Social Work services should target high risk cases and failure to provide effective services to this group can result in further escalation and expensive external placements. However it is suggested that service delivery can be enhanced by ensuring more focused and targeting of services and ensuring better use is made of social work qualified staff. The proposals outlined in this report aim to re-configure and re-focus services to adolescents in a clear, consistent and cost effective manner. Due to reductions in youth crime, legislative changes and integration of CAMHS, they are achievable without reducing capacity to meet current levels of demand. They are also achievable without compromising a successful youth justice strategy.

4.6 In addition the Department is currently in discussion with the Scottish Government to look at whether the successful approach to youth justice which has developed in Dundee can be one that is progressed into a whole system approach which covers the full range of interfaces across youth justice and criminal justice interventions. Initial meetings have been set up with the Scottish Government to progress this, if these discussions are successful such an approach will strengthen the proposals contained in this report.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major implications.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be made available on the Council website - <http://www.dundeecity.gov.uk/equanddiv/equimpact/>.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Director of Finance have been consulted in preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were relied upon in the preparation of this report:

7.1 Dundee Youth Justice Partnership Annual Report 2009-2010 2 "Getting it Right for Young People Who Offend"

7.2 Report to Policy and Resources, Restructuring of Out of Hours September 2010 - Report no 592-2010

7.3 Equality Impact Assessment

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DATE: 28 January 2011