

Meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1

11 September 2023

Recommendations/Actions

Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee made the following Recommendations:

1. That narrative be included in future reports to Scrutiny explaining why the budget table with a breakdown of the financial and staffing information in the Youth Justice Service Plan did not show financial support from the Probation and / or Health Services.

Officers Response

The Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS) will provide details of the financial and staffing information in future Scrutiny reports and provide a breakdown of financial in-kind staffing costs and contributions from all its partners including probation and health services.

2. That the Committee write a letter to the Probation Service highlighting the increased demand on the Youth Justice Service (YJS) and requesting greater support given the statutory duty on the YJS to have a minimum of representatives from Police, Education, Probation, Health, and Children's Social Care.

For Scrutiny to action.

3. That there be more engagement and liaising between schools and the Police and with a focus on prevention.

Officers Response

Engagement is actively underway, driven by the service manager and the operational staff.

Their primary objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the prevailing prevention needs within the school environment under the purview of the BYJS. This will ensure a safer and more secure educational environment for the pupils.

The service manager and operational staff have engaged in a series of meetings with schools. These meetings serve as a platform for comprehensive discussions, with the overarching goal of deciphering the intricate dynamics of the current youth justice service prevention requirements within the educational settings. The collaborative effort between the service and the schools underscores the commitment to addressing potential issues at their roots.

It is worth highlighting that progress has already been made. Some schools have participated in tailored sessions designed to address their unique concerns. These sessions often take the form of whole-school assemblies, where students and staff come together to explore critical concepts like the 'offending ladder.' These discussions delve into the consequences of engaging in offending behaviours and emphasise the profound impact such choices can have on pupil's future prospects. These assemblies serve as a powerful means of not only education but also deterrence.

Looking ahead, the initiative is poised to expand its reach. A pivotal component of this expansion involves the active participation of a dedicated youth justice police officer who is

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committed to making a difference in the lives of the students. The officer's role will be instrumental in delivering in-house prevention sessions directly to children within the school premises. This direct engagement with students allows for a more personalised approach to addressing their specific needs and concerns, fostering a sense of trust and collaboration between law enforcement and the younger generation.

This initiative doesn't represent a one-time effort; instead, it signifies the beginning of an ongoing and comprehensive programme of delivery. This programme is designed to cover a wide spectrum of crucial topics, including but not limited to:

- anti-social behaviour;
- the 'offending ladder';
- weapons awareness;
- substance support; and
- restorative intervention.

The comprehensive nature of this programme reflects a holistic approach to youth justice, addressing not only the symptoms but also the underlying causes of offending behaviours.

In addition to the outlined areas of focus, the programme remains open and adaptable to any other youth justice-related needs that may arise during its course. Flexibility and responsiveness are key principles in ensuring the effectiveness of this initiative, as it aims to provide tailored solutions to the evolving challenges faced by students in today's complex society.

In summary, this ongoing initiative represents targeted effort by the BYJS to proactively address and prevent youth justice issues within schools. By fostering understanding, education, and direct engagement, this initiative endeavours to create a safer and more secure educational environment while equipping students with the knowledge and support needed to make positive choices for their future.

4. That a young person aged 18 plus but under 25 who has gone through the YJS be invited to sit on the Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS) Management Board to provide their insight on their experience of the YJS and possible improvements.

Officers Response

Extending an invitation to a young individual between the ages of 18 and 25 who has prior experience with the Youth Justice Service to join the BYJS Management Board and contribute their valuable insights and improvement suggestions is a significant and worthwhile undertaking. However, consideration needs to be given to the methods of engagement that are utilised to promote successful communication. The following procedure will be actioned by the service manager and operational managers.

Identification and selection: The first step is to identify and select a suitable candidate from among the young individuals who have gone through the BYJS in the Bridgend area and fall within the specified age range (18 plus but under 25). This selection process could involve

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outreach to previous BYJS participants through caseworkers, community organisations, or other relevant channels.

Invitation: Once a suitable candidate has been identified and agreed upon, they would be formally invited to join the BYJS Management Board or an alternative suitable forum for example a suitable social media platform. The invitation could typically come from the BYJS Service Manager or another responsible authority within the BYJS. These options are being explored.

Orientation and training: Before joining the Management Board or an alternative forum of choice, the selected child will receive orientation and training. This training can include an overview of the BYJS's goals, functions, and operations, as well as an understanding of the role they will play and their responsibilities as a board member.

Integration into the Board: The child would then bring their views to the BYJS Management Board as a child voice. They could communicate with other board members, where their perspective as a former BYJS participant would be valued and respected.

Regular participation: To ensure the effectiveness of their role, the child would be expected to actively participate in activities that would be relevant to raise in the board. They would have the opportunity to share their experiences with the BYJS, including any challenges they faced and suggestions for improvements.

Feedback and Recommendations: The child's input would be considered seriously by the board. They would have the platform to provide feedback on their personal experiences with the BYJS and offer recommendations for enhancements or changes to the system. This feedback can encompass various aspects, such as program effectiveness, support services, and youth engagement strategies.

Evaluation and impact assessment: Periodically, the BYJS would evaluate the impact of having a child on the Management Board. This evaluation could involve assessing whether their input has led to meaningful improvements in the YJS, as well as the overall effectiveness of their participation.

Continuous involvement: Ideally, the involvement of young people who have gone through the BYJS sitting on the BYJS Management Board should be an ongoing and sustainable initiative. It should not be a one-time occurrence but rather a continuous effort to ensure that the voices of those with direct experience are heard and considered in the youth justice system's development and enhancement.

5. Given that there were recruitment issues across the whole of the organisation but recognised that there was a need to have adequate specialist staffing to conduct some of the trauma screening and strongly recommended they look to establish if what they currently had was sufficient, so they were going to be able to reach their performance targets and ensure young people are safeguarded.

Officers Response

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To address this issue, a proactive plan has been put into action. Currently, 45 staff members are undergoing training in the trauma model of practice. Additionally, 15 leads from the four different services will receive specialised training, specifically focusing on leading trauma practice. These trained leads will play a crucial role in facilitating trauma screening and further developing the trauma model within their respective service areas.

To ensure that this development work is both effective and evidence-based, it will undergo rigorous evaluation by Kent University. This evaluation process is an integral part of the Youth Endowment Fund's overall assessment and will help gauge the impact and effectiveness of the trauma screening and practice model implementation. By incorporating this evaluation, the organisation can make informed decisions to continually improve and refine their approach to better safeguard the well-being of young people.

Additional Information:

And the Committee requested:

6. A link to the Joint Inspection responses made by Care Inspectorate Wales.

Officer's response: (Shared with Members)

<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/joint-inspectorate-review-child-protection-arrangements-jicpa-bridgend-2023>

7. More information regarding the reasons why 45% of children were not attending school referenced as reported from the My Voice questionnaires.

Officers Response

The following breakdown shows the rational for why 45% of children were not attending school.

- 27% were over school age or school leavers.
- 12% attending college or other forms of education.
- 6% not in education, training or employment.

8. Data regarding the national Key Performance Indicators to be circulated to members to see the aspirations for each part of the service, and for measurement and performance monitoring of the Youth Justice Service.

Officers Response

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182253/KPI_Recording_Guidance_for_YJSs_v_1.6.pdf

9. More data on how many trauma screenings using the Trauma Recovery Model were outstanding, how often they would be reviewed and how the service would manage the staffing resource to achieve it.

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There was a total of 89 outstanding trauma screenings that were scheduled using the Trauma Recovery Model. These screenings were intended for 141 eligible children, out of which 52 screenings (approximately 37%) were successfully completed. However, it was recognised that due to this being a newly developed system, there were issues related to the non-completion of the screenings.

In response to this, BYJS took proactive steps to address the non-completion issue. An in-depth quality assurance exercise was conducted, which identified the root causes and contributing factors behind the non-completion of screenings. To ensure that all required screenings are completed in the future, a comprehensive 'checklist' was implemented for every case assessment. This checklist includes a requirement to ensure that all necessary screenings are carried out as part of the assessment process.

The important point to note is that BYJS does not foresee the need for additional staffing resources to address this issue. Instead, the checklist has been seamlessly integrated into every case assessment, making it a routine part of their processes. Furthermore, to maintain a rigorous and ongoing review process, the trauma screenings are systematically reviewed on a monthly basis by the Quality Assurance and Performance Officer within BYJS. Any issues or concerns that arise during these reviews are addressed and discussed in weekly senior management meetings. This proactive approach ensures that the screenings are continuously monitored, any problems are swiftly rectified, and the well-being of the children under their care remains a top priority.

Forward Work Programme: The Committee requested that it would be beneficial to have school representatives - Headteachers and Health Board representatives invited for the scrutiny of future reports on the Youth Justice service.

For Scrutiny to action.