

SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	Tuesday 12th September 2023
SUBJECT:	Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Annual Plan 2023-2024
REPORT FROM:	Cllr Lucy Smith, Cabinet Member for children and young people.
CONTACT OFFICER:	Rachel Meyrick – Head of Service Cared for Children and Youth Justice -Rochdale Council Sandra Bruce Assistant Director Early Help and School Readiness - Bury Council

1.0 BACKGROUND

This report has been provided as a summary of the Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Annual Plan 2023-2024.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to have a Youth Justice Plan to set out how youth justice services will be funded and delivered locally within the parameters created by available resources. The annual plan sets out the plans and priorities of Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service (YJS) for the period 2023-2024.

It will be reviewed annually to reflect the impact of changing national and local youth justice priorities and service user feedback. It directly addresses the aim of the Youth Justice System to prevent offending by children and young people (Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service was formed as a combined service in 2014. The Service is a multi agency service and is represented at strategic level in a range of key partnerships (e.g. Children and Families Partnership, Voluntary sector, Bury Community Safety Partnership, Rochdale Community Safety Partnership, Safeguarding Children's Boards) and a number of Greater Manchester Authority partnerships including court users and complex safeguarding.

Bury and Rochdale YJS aims to continually improve and to incorporate not only effective practice but also emerging practice and innovation. The service seeks to self-evaluate and be critical through quality assurance techniques, to maintain the delivery of best outcomes and to continually improve performance in relation to first-time entrants, reoffending and the use of custody.

2.0 ISSUES

Policy development

Bury and Rochdale YJS is a multi-agency partnership that sits within CSC (Childrens Social Care) in Rochdale Borough Council. The service is led by the

Assistant Director of CSC (Rochdale) and the Head of Youth Justice, the Head of Service also has responsibility for Rochdale Cared for Children Service, Step Ahead Service (care experienced) and Post Order and Permanence Team.

A service level agreement is in place including terms of reference and monthly contractual meetings between leads across Bury and Rochdale to ensure information sharing, exception reporting and service planning is a shared approach which supports the work planning across the boroughs.

Bury and Rochdale YJS is committed to working in partnership to ensure:

- Children are appropriately diverted from the YJS
- That offending by children is prevented and the use of custody is reduced
- The delivery of quality and effective services to children, parents/carers, victims and the community
- The improvement of practice and achievement of positive outcomes for children and young people
- That children are safeguarded and risk to the public is minimised and managed effectively
- That restorative justice, trauma-informed and child-first approaches underpin our practice
- The unnecessary criminalisation of cared for children and other disproportionality represented group is avoided where at all possible
- Improved Education, Training and Employment opportunities for children within the service
- Improved physical health and wellbeing for all children entering YJS
- That the service provides value for money.

Performance monitoring

Governance of the YJS is provided by the YJS Partnership Board which meets bi-monthly, and this is chaired by the Director of Children's Services (Bury).

During 2022/ 2023 in addition to the National Standards for Children and quarterly reports from the YJS and Partners the YJ Partnership Board has considered the following themes and areas:

- YOI Wetherby updates
- Skill Mill
- Bury and Rochdale prevention offers
- Resettlement
- Transitions and Transition Protocol
- Health – Bury and Rochdale
- FTE's multi agency audit report and findings
- SALT GM YJS Annual Report
- Turnaround Programme
- Youth Justice Transformation Delivery Plan
- Victim Liaison/ Voice of the Victim & Restorative Justice
- Engagement and participation

As set out in the Youth Justice Service Governance and Leadership Guidance, 2021 Management board members should consider the following in terms of their knowledge of the YJS and their role in its oversight:

- Does the YJS have a clear vision for the service and how it can deliver a high quality, personalised and responsive service to all children?
- Are the outcomes described in the standards for children in the youth justice system being achieved?
- Are there any gaps in knowledge about the YJS, how it operates and the needs of the children with whom it is working?
- How can the YJS partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery? Are there any problems, which need to be addressed?
- Are there any resource issues, which may impact on service delivery?
- How can your individual role (as a management board member) be developed to enhance the effectiveness of the board? What training and support do you need?
- How satisfied are you that the YJS can demonstrate that it works effectively to support desistance and positive outcomes for children?
- Do you understand the characteristics of children coming into the local justice system, and any disparity in groups from the local population?
- Have any HMIP inspection findings, including thematic inspections, been addressed?

Future activity

Within the plan, Bury and Rochdale YJS have devised a YJ Partnership Action Plan 2023/ 2024 which will be updated by the management team monthly and scrutinised by the YJS Partnership Board on a quarterly basis. Bury and Rochdale YJS believe their vision and focus on future planning is strongly aligned to the YJB Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024. The vision for a child first youth justice system is strongly embedded within our culture. We believe in strong and resilient leadership that leads by example and invests in its staff to ensure that joined-up, innovative and evidence-based practice is at the heart of what we do.

Following a management development session and a whole service development day Bury and Rochdale YJS developed our 6 priorities for 2023/2024:

1. Prevention - Ensuring the holistic needs of our children and young people are met at the earliest opportunity

Reason: To ensure that the children across Bury and Rochdale are receiving the right support as soon as need is identified and that the offer including mental health, social and education needs for young people at risk of escalation through the criminal justice system is robust and reduces the risk of offending behaviour.

Action: Review the pathways to early help support, across both Bury and Rochdale to ensure that children and young people quickly identified and are provided with early support to prevent offending behaviour. Ensure a holistic approach to health (including mental health) social and education needs through a placed-based early help delivery model.

Expected Outcome: Improved offer which identifies and responds to young people at the earliest opportunity which leads to a reduction in young people entering the criminal justice system.

2. Disproportionality and diversity

Reason: To better understand the local demographic and the disproportionate representation within the YJ System that can impact on children and young people's life chances.

Action: To develop robust local data sets that provide live information and can evidence disproportionate groups. To develop a Policy and Implementation Plan.

Expected Outcome: To be able to target resources and increase understanding of children who are disproportionately represented within the system.

3. Adolescent offer

Reason: To be instrumental in the development of the 'Adolescents' pathways across GM and locally; which include all services for children at risk aged 13-19.

Action: To review the range of services that are available for adolescents, including Youth Justice & Targeted Youth Provision, that contribute to this agenda.

Expected Outcome: To ensure services are co-ordinated and joined up with a focus on adolescents. To see a reduction in CCE and other factors that place young people at risk.

4. Voice of the child

Reason: To ensure that we operate a 'Child First' youth justice system that hears the 'Voice of Children' and is prepared to act upon it to improve service delivery.

Action: To listen to what children and young people are telling us and think of new and innovative ways that make this meaningful.

Expected Outcome: To evidence that the 'Voice of the Child' has informed and shaped services and improved our offer for children at risk of, or involved in, the youth justice system.

5. Induction and development – board members

Reason: To ensure that all new and existing member of the Youth Justice Partnership Board understand their roles and responsibilities.

Action: Review the induction procedures and schedule a development session. Ensure thematic areas are reviewed at Board meetings.

Expected Outcome: Improved understanding of the role for Board Members, which ensures that they promote and champion the role of youth justice in their own services.

6. Quality assurance – implementation and oversight

Reason: To ensure effective QA across a range of service areas that continues to improve outcomes.

Action: Through continual audit and monitoring processes, both locally and across GM.

Expected Outcome: Improved outcomes for children and young people as result of effective service delivery.

Defining Success:

Bury and Rochdale YJS define success as being able **to inspire, encourage and empower – supporting our children’s individual needs to achieve a brighter future** (the YJS Vision). Furthermore Section 4 of the plan sets out Bury and Rochdale YJS commitment to working in partnership to ensure:

- Children are appropriately diverted from the YJS
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- The improvement of practice and achievement of positive outcomes for children and young people
- That children are safeguarded and risk to the public is minimised and managed effectively
- That restorative justice, trauma-informed and child-first approaches underpin our practice
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- That the service provides value for money.

Challenges, risks and issues

6 key service challenges, risks and issues have been identified. Below is an outline of these with actions that are being implemented to mitigate such risk.

Risk	Action to Mitigate Risk
1. Future budget efficiencies/reductions in partner contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Service Level Agreement between Rochdale and Bury • Review all vacancies as they arise in context of service needs • Maximise community resources • Maximise opportunities for partnership working with other agencies and ensure all secondments are in place • YJS Working Plan 2023/2024 • Quality Assurance processes/ quality improvement plans and processes • Commit to continuous quality improvement regardless of budget situation • Robust financial planning within Bury and Rochdale Council and with partners.
2. Increases in remand bed nights places increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality budget monitoring and management • Timely, accurate and relevant information to

<p>strain on both Bury Council's and Rochdale Council's associated budget</p>	<p>managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief relevant partners on need for efficient, speedy processes • Constantly review and develop Bury and Rochdale practice in each remand case, including actively considering applications for community bail packages • Provide timely updates to Bury and Rochdale Management Board and other relevant partnerships • Robust bail packages to be presented to court as alternatives to custody
<p>3. Embedding new practice guidance – all policies, procedures and guidance are currently under review to ensure that practice is current and any gaps are identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have been made aware in the Whole Service Meetings that policies are being updated. • Once the policies are updated (plan for end of Summer 23), they will be shared with staff and the YJS Partnership Board for consultation. • Once agreed, all staff and Managers will be allocated at least one Policy each to summarise and then a development session will be facilitated whereby everyone can provide the key points from each policy in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. This will embed key learning and ensure that all key points can be accessed at ease for day to day use.
<p>4. Ensuring young people/ parents and cares have a voice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematically seeking and capturing views of children, young people, parents and carers including conversational audits • Development of a YJS parent forum to provide additional opportunity to understand what is going well and what we can do better • Presentations to the YJ Board to increase awareness and support with regard to requests for additional support or alternative partnership resources to respond to unmet needs of children and young people in the YJS
<p>5. GMP Focus on arrests: There is a current impetus within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to arrest and hold more people committing offences to account. This increased focus and resource may indeed result in more children being brought to the attention of GM Youth Justice Services through the OOC and Court arena. The number of children currently under investigation (81 Bury/ 116 Rochdale as of 23.05.2023) presents a risk (from a capacity point of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YJS to work closely alongside GMP strategically at the YJS Partnership Board and other relevant forums and operationally to ensure that children are being dealt with proportionately to the seriousness of the offences and the individual circumstances of the child. A balance to be achieved in terms of child first principles and management of risk and public protection. • The weekly Joint Decision Making Panel to scrutinise decisions ensuring that children are diverted from Courts and back to the Police were appropriate. • The quarterly OOC Scrutiny Panel led at GM Head of Service level to further scrutinise decision making. • Ensure timely and improved information sharing between YJS and police to assist with responsive and proactive risk management/ interventions.

view) in the event that a high proportion result in referrals to the YJS or charge	
6. Lack of dedicated Data Analysts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HoS working with the ICT service to increase data analyst capacity and provide more training to other members of the ICT team so that the responsibility does not lie with one person.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The Youth Justice Annual Plan is a requirement of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and has been completed in accordance with the YJB guidance and template. The plan has been co-produced with staff, young people, families and the board. The plan has been agreed by the board and signed by the Director of Children's Services.

List of Background Papers:-

Contact Details:-

[Report Author]

Executive Director sign off Date: _____

JET Meeting Date: _____