



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

Youth Justice Strategic Plan for Luton 2015-2016



Foreword



As the chair of the Chief Officer Board for the Luton Youth Offending Service it is a privilege to report that the Youth Offending Service continues to provide the highest standards of professional service in its mission to reduce levels of youth related crime and disorder in Luton. This sterling effort continues to receive local and national recognition.

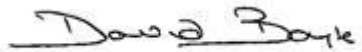
The performance data contained in the strategic plan demonstrates that the prevention work undertaken by the service to reduce the numbers of children and young people aged under 18 years involved in crime remains strong and the prevention of proven further reoffending already in the system continues to be below that of both national and similar family group comparators.

As an example of good practice recognised at a national level I would like to highlight the holistic early intervention and prevention work the YOS undertakes as part of the whole family approach. Understanding that young people do not exist in a vacuum but are influenced by a variety of factors including their environment at home is an essential component of the YOS crime prevention strategy.

There are however a number of serious challenges for the YOS and other partners to tackle, not least of which is the prevalence of gang related activity which draws young people into situations of serious risk and violence presenting a real and present threat to the safety of our communities. This is reflected by the increase in the number of remands to the secure estate. For these reasons tackling serious youth violence and in particular gang activity remains a priority for the service and while a lot has been done through the work of the MAGPAN, there is still much to do in order to eradicate this type of crime.

A core component of the success of the service is the partnership working that takes place internally with practitioners from a variety of agencies coalescing around a common vision and making best use of their individual skills to create a nexus of capacity to prevent crime and disorder. This, in turn, feeds into a number of other local partnership arrangements all committed to making Luton a safer place, to live, work and socialise.

Finally, on behalf of the Chief Officer Board, I would like to thank the staff within the service and our partner agencies for the achievements of last year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Boyle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Chief Superintendent David Boyle
Bedfordshire Police
Chair, Luton Youth Offending Service Chief Officer Board

Demography of Luton

Luton is located approximately 30 miles north of central London on the M1 motorway and with its own international airport.

The official estimate of the population¹ of Luton is 208,000 for 2013 which is an increase of 1% from the 2012 estimate. Latest information suggests this rose to 211,000 in 2014²

With an area of 4336 hectares, the official population figure translates into a population density of 48.0 persons per hectare which is greater than many London Boroughs.

According to the 2013 mid-year population estimates, the age structure of Luton's population differs from that of the country as a whole. Luton has a younger population than the national average. The under 18 age group account for 26 per cent of the Luton population compared with 21 per cent nationally.

The town is ethnically diverse, with approximately 55% of the population being of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) origin, with significant Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and African Caribbean communities³.

In recent years the diversity of the population has increased with foreign students coming to the University of Bedfordshire. There has been a significant shift in the population over recent years, primarily driven by those arriving from newly EU acceded A8 countries of Eastern Europe. Since May 2004, there have been nearly 20,000 new National Insurance registrations by people from A8 countries, with over 80 per cent of these coming from Poland. A study by Mayhew Harper Associates⁴ showed concentrations of new communities of Congolese, Somalians, Ghanaians, Nigerians, Turks and Zimbabweans in Luton. There is increasing acceptance that Luton is a "super-diverse" community.

Luton is ranked as the 69th (out of 326) most deprived local authority⁵. In 2007 Luton was ranked as the 87th most deprived local authority and in 2004 as the 101st. This indicates that Luton is becoming relatively more deprived in comparison to the other local authorities of England. Luton has nine output areas in the top ten per cent most deprived areas in the country.

¹ 2013 Mid Year Population Estimate, Office for National Statistics 2014

² 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimate, Office for National Statistics 2014

³ 2011 Census

⁴ The Growth and Changing Complexion of Luton's Population, Mayhew Harper Associates, 2011

⁵ 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Communities & Local Government 2011

The 2011 Family Poverty⁶ analysis showed that nearly one-quarter of households in Luton can be classed as living in poverty. Further work suggested that this would increase given the national policy framework and, more recently, the welfare reform programme.

Economy in Luton

Gross Value Added (GVA) is a measurement of economic activity and GVA⁷ per head in Luton is £18,812 which means Luton is 12 per cent lower than the national average.

According to the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)⁸ (2011) there are 80,000 jobs in Luton. There are now more service sector jobs than manufacturing ones but manufacturing employment is still higher than the national average and has remained stable since the loss of many jobs from Vauxhall. Major employers in Luton are Luton Borough Council, health services, easyJet, TUI UK Ltd, Monarch Airlines and General Motors.

Luton Airport is a major employer in the region and also a strong driver of the economy of Luton. An analysis of employment of the airport carried out by Luton Borough Council in 2011 showed that 8,100 people were employed at the airport.

The average annual salary⁹ of people living in Luton is £25,200 per annum which is less than national average of £27,000. The average annual salary of those who work in Luton (but who don't necessarily live in Luton) is £25,800 which is slightly higher than the residence based figure but lower than the national average.

The unemployment rate¹⁰ in Luton of 3 per cent is higher than both the national and regional averages of 2.7 per cent and 2.0 per cent respectively. In some Wards of the town the rate is between 4.5 and 4.8%.

Partnership & Governance

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

⁶ Luton Child Poverty Needs Assessment (2010) and Experian (2011) Family Poverty Study.

⁷ Gross Value Added 2012, Office for National Statistics 2013

⁸ Business Register & Employment Survey 2012, Office for National Statistics 2013

⁹ Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings, 2013, Office for National Statistics 2013

¹⁰ Unemployment Claimant Count, May 2014, Office for National Statistics via NOMIS

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.

The Youth Justice Board and the Audit Commission's 2004 report into youth justice state that it is imperative that the YOS sits equally between the criminal justice system and other children and young people's services. YOSs should not be so embedded within the child welfare system that the confidence, support and contribution of criminal justice agencies and the public is lost. Equally, YOSs must not be dominated by criminal justice services so that they are too distanced from other children's services and cannot access services needed to address the risk factors faced by young people who offend.

Youth Offending Services 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.
- A duty to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

In Luton the service is hosted within the Children and Learning Department of the local authority with the Head of Service line managed by the Assistant Director Prevention & Early Intervention. 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.

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. The Board receives progress reports in relation to financial expenditure and performance at each meeting.

The role of the Chief Officer Board includes:

- Managing the performance of the prevention of youth crime agenda in Luton and ensuring the delivery of the statutory principal aim (to prevent offending and re-offending by those under 18 years) at local level
- Assuming corporate ownership of preventing and tackling youth crime in Luton
- Ensuring proper accountability arrangements for, and oversight of, the operation of the YOS partnership
- Overseeing the appointment and designation of a Head of Youth Offending Service;
- Requiring 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
- Ensuring delivery of the local strategic plan for youth justice
- Ensuring YOS staff receive appropriate training and development opportunities to address any competence deficits identified.
- Ensuring a significant proportion of total staff from the statutory agencies remain in the YOS to form a core staff group
- Ensuring the YOS is adequately resourced with equitable contributions from all partner agencies included in the pooled budget and oversight of the budget
- Ensuring children and young people with whom the YOS works have access to appropriate mainstream services
- Ensuring the YOS provides and receives maximum operational intelligence to and from the partners in their work
- Ensuring the YOS's infrastructure needs are addressed

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

The YOS is fully integrated into local planning arrangements for both children and young people and criminal justice services. 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 Committee Planning Group (CCCPG)
- Bedfordshire Missing Children Panel
- Bedfordshire Children Sexual Exploitation Panel (CSEP)
- Bedfordshire Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing Children Strategic Group
- Bedfordshire Victim Partnership

Many of the priorities of the service complement and contribute to those of our partners such as supporting vulnerable victims and preventing repeat victimisation, identifying and working with the most risky offenders, tackling the underlying causes of crime to reduce the number of victims and break the cycle of reoffending, and safeguarding children and young people and the community from harm. This Plan is aligned to many of our partner's strategies and plans including Bedfordshire Police & Crime Plan 2015–16; Luton Children & Young People's Plan 2014-2019; Luton Community Safety Partnership Plan 2014-17; Luton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015; Luton Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2014-17; Luton Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2015-18; Bedfordshire Hate Crime Plan 2015-16; Luton Borough Council Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-16, Prevent Delivery Plan, Family Poverty Strategy, and Luton Safeguarding Board Business Plan 2015-16.

The issue of radicalisation and extremism: the Government's Prevent strategy deals with all aspects of terrorist threat with a focus on the risks of the creation of environments where individuals may be radicalised/exposed to extremist ideologies. Within this strategy is the Channel Programme approach – a multi-agency response from a safeguarding framework – to identify and support vulnerable individuals at risk of radicalisation. The YOS is a member of the Bedfordshire Prevent and Channel Panel which is currently chaired by the Service Director for Early Intervention, Luton Borough Council Children and Learning Directorate. In Luton the work of this panel is reported to the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. The YOS is embedded in this aspect of work, with an effective working relationship with Luton Borough Council Prevent Co-ordinator, Institutions Officer (Home office funded post) and

Bedfordshire Police. WRAP Training for new staff within the service and refresher training for all staff is part of the rolling YOS staff training programme.

In order to continually improve practice the service reviews all relevant thematic inspections by HMI Probation and ensures relevant action plans are in place to address any issues or gaps identified locally.

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 prevention work with families is still undertaken within the main service and linked to our national performance indicator to prevent first time entrants to the youth justice system..

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

In addition the YOS contacts all identified victims of those young people known to the Service. Direct work with victims includes gathering/listening to their views and experience, providing them with information, supporting and facilitating access to other services they may need, enabling participation in direct restorative work such as shuttle mediation and Restorative Conferencing. There is an emphasis on the voice and needs of the victim throughout the work of the service: through initial assessment; reports; intervention planning and reviews as well as service delivery including indirect reparative work.

Luton YOS is also a member of the Board representing the Bedfordshire Victims Partnership <http://www.bedfordshirevictimspartnership.org.uk/>. The partnership overall is comprised of around 25 organisations working across the county with victims of crime aiming to ensure a more seamless service for victims, that the voice of victims is represented and that future provision as a whole seeks to meet the identified needs of all victims in Bedfordshire.

We are in the process of developing a much closer working partnership with the University of Bedfordshire who evaluated our 'Weapons Awareness Programme' and we aim to have more of our work and interventions evaluated.

The service also works closely with other local partners to provide interventions to young people. One such example is a local Firebreak Course run by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service where young people are put through some tough training over a period of a week which ends in a "passing out" parade and presentation of certificates.

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 from other agencies are made using the early help assessment process but referrals are also received from the Multi Agency Gangs Panel and in line with the local anti-social behaviour protocol.
- 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 currently holds the Restorative Services Quality Mark (RSQM).

- Reparation and unpaid work, where children and young people are involved in local projects or undertake work in order to make some recompense to the local community for the harm they have caused.
- The service also operates the Junior Attendance Centre in Luton

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 conferencing, restorative approaches, evidence led approaches, surveillance monitoring (statutory orders only) etc.

Resources and Value for Money

The cost of crime places a heavy financial burden on society and by reducing first time entrants to the youth justice system, reducing reoffending and improving outcomes for children and young people, the Youth Offending Service makes a significant contribution to reducing this burden as well as improving life chances and reducing the fear of crime.

The statutory partnership contributions to the service for 2015/16 are as follows:

Agency	Cash (£)	Seconded Staff (£)	Total (£)
Luton Borough Council	640,829	66,195	707,024
Bedfordshire Police	54,200	41,850	96,050
National Probation Service	0	38,409	38,409
Luton Clinical Commissioning Group (Health)	0	50,363	50,363
Total	695,029	196,817	891,846

The service now works across the family environment of children and young people at risk of or involved in criminal behaviour thus providing a wider response to risk posed/need. This work also helps prevent the need for children and young people to come into local authority care. The service aims to achieve positive outcomes for all family members by supporting each family's capacity to change and embed and sustain those changes thus improving the experiences of families and communities. Our aim is to support

families to achieve a range of improved outcomes for all family members including outcomes relating to health, education, employment, offending behaviour, parenting etc

Other funding for 2015/16:

- £419,661 Youth Justice Board Good Practice Grant – ring fenced for activities outlined in Conditions of Grant 2015/16 for the purposes of the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services in Luton with a view to achieving the following outcomes:
 - Reduction in youth re-offending;
 - Reduction in the numbers of first time entrants to the justice system;
 - Reduction in the use of youth custody (remand & sentenced)
 - Effective public protection, and
 - Effective safeguarding

In Luton this year we will be utilising these funds on staffing costs to enhance our prevention, early intervention and intensive family work across the service. The service has a strong history of adhering fully to grant conditions with timely submission of date to the YJB, complying with secure estate placement information etc.

- £2,000 Youth Justice Board Restorative Justice Grant – ring fenced for Restorative Justice training and services
- £8,796 Youth Justice Board Unpaid Work Grant - ring fenced for unpaid work services
- 16,125 Junior Attendance Centre – ring fenced for the Junior Attendance Centre
- £70,000 from the Police & Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Fund helps fund our Drug & Alcohol Worker and our Youth Justice Assistants
- In addition Victim Support utilise a donation received from London Luton Airport Limited to provide the service with a worker to undertake liaison with and support of victims of youth crime.

In addition the service has been successful in a bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner to fund a second Victim Contact Worker which will allow us to work with victims under 18 in Luton where the perpetrators are adults. This is not part of our statutory work as a Youth Offending Service but recognition locally of our work with both young people and victims of youth crime that the Police & Crime Commissioner now wishes us to extend our work to all young victims of crime.

All public authorities continue to be hit hard by the national economic situation and resulting central government spending reductions. Luton Youth Offending Service is no exception. The service has seen a number of budget reductions in recent years amounting to approximately 50% reduction between 2010/11 and the last financial year.

In 2011 the service underwent a major restructure as a result of changing responsibilities and an initial significant reduction in budget largely in the contribution received from the local authority. Essentially this restructure deleted a number of very specialist posts and created some more generic posts. We also brought our prevention and early intervention service in house to reduce costs. There has been another structure change on a much smaller scale since that time. Despite these reductions we have managed to maintain a strong level of front line delivery resources.

We are keen to ascertain a greater understanding of 'what works' with children and young people who are at risk of offending and re-offending. To this aim we are in the process of developing a much closer working partnership with the University of Bedfordshire who have recently completed an evaluation of our 'Weapons Awareness Programme'.

We have placed an emphasis on maintaining and developing prevention and early intervention services to avoid children and young people becoming embroiled in offending behaviour thus reducing the numbers entering the system. As the numbers of first time entrants reduce, so the service finds itself working with the more complex, high risk young people and their families and in doing so contributing significantly to agendas of our partners.

'The youth offending service has developed a whole family approach which recognises that to affect change in young people's lives there is a need to develop the support structures and protective factors offered by some parents and siblings.'.....'The Youth Offending Service is employing a whole family approach rather than a narrow focus on the young person as an offender. This promises a more holistic and partnership approach to crime prevention.'

Home Office, Ending Gang & Youth Violence
Peer Review of Luton Report, September 2014

'Case Managers and other staff are doing some excellent work with families even where the young person is not fully engaging. The investment in this family work is to be commended'

Lead Inspector, HM Inspectorate of Probation,
Short Quality Screening Inspection, June 2014

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 have therefore developed strong and effective pre and post court interventions that enable a more whole family and system approach for young people who offend or who are at risk of offending to ensure they receive effective interventions and support that reduces the likelihood of further offending and poor outcomes. Parents and carers are key to the success and sustainability of youth crime prevention and need to be supported and enabled to fulfil their responsibilities thus ensuring a 'whole family' approach to young people's problems and offending behaviour.

Luton YOS has a long history of successful prevention, early intervention and intensive family work predating the government's Troubled Families initiative. This work remains strong and we are working closely with Luton's Stronger Families initiative (part of the government's Troubled Families Programme), with this service taking the lead with a large number of 'Stronger Families' to ensure there is avoidance of duplication of work between agencies.

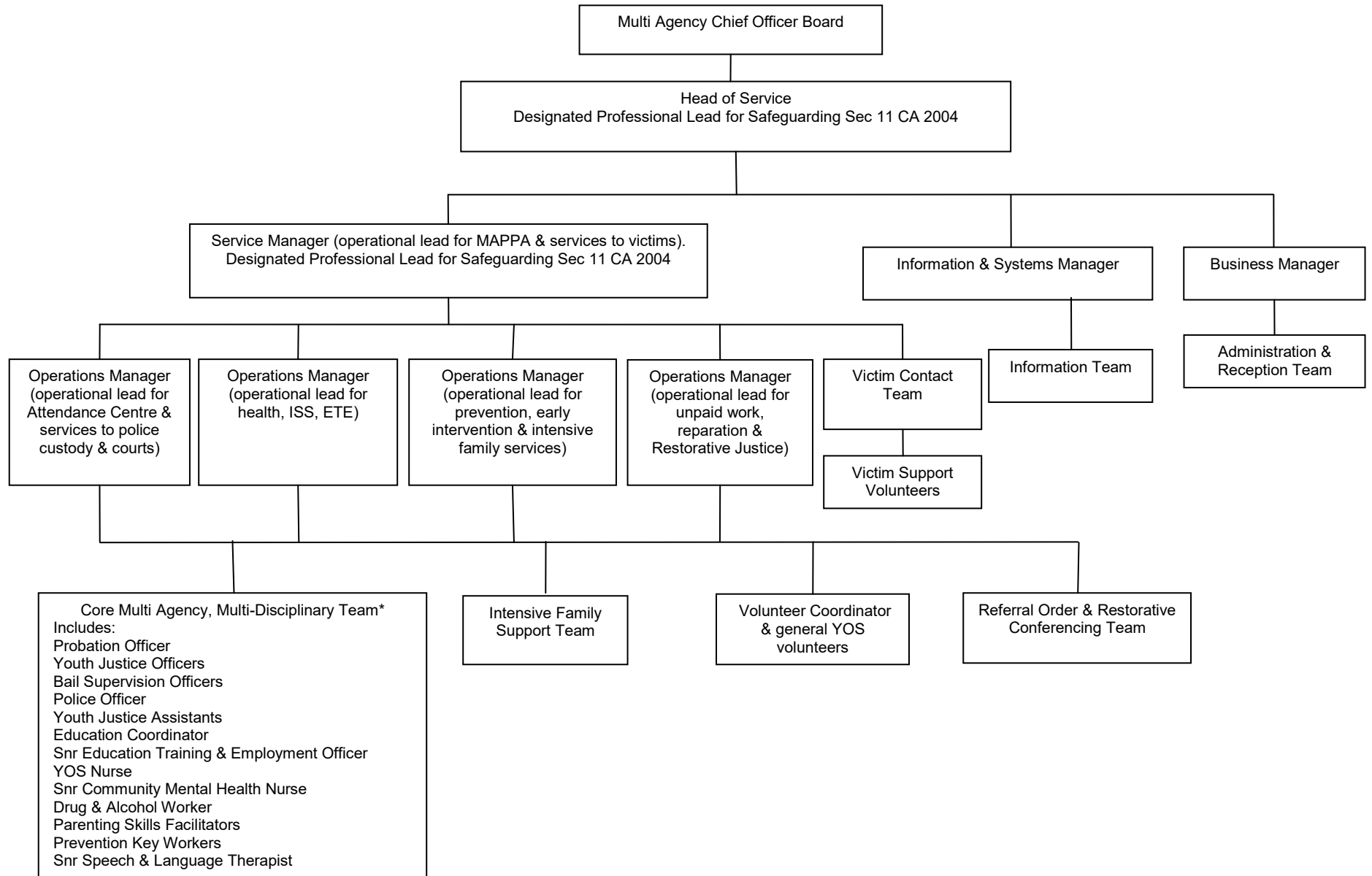
However, this current financial year has seen another 38% (£400,000) reduction in contribution from the local authority in addition to a £34,000 reduction on the Good Practice Grant. This means that the service in its current form is no longer sustainable and we will be working hard to address this shortfall with the least impact on front line services as possible.

Service Structure

Staff training during the last year has focused on assessment and planning in response to HMIP feedback as well as early preparations for the transition to the national Asset Plus assessment tool. This has included internal workshops and commissioning providers to deliver courses in order to improve practitioners analysis and professional judgements. We have increased the number of practitioners who are able to undertake assessments and deliver interventions to those young people who display sexually harmful behaviour through the use of AIM and Good Lives model. Staff have also been trained in the use of Outcome Star and this has been embedded into our assessment and review processes for all young people and families open to the Service. Staff continue to receive up to date Safeguarding training including that concerning child sexual exploitation.

All staff receive training in the principles of Restorative Practice and Restorative Justice. Eight staff have undertaken further training to enable them to facilitate Restorative Conferences and further staff are due to be trained as facilitators. We also train all our Referral Order volunteers in Restorative principles and to date eight of them are trained facilitators. Two staff are in the process of submitting portfolios to become Accredited Practitioners with the Restorative Justice Council.

Service Structure



* The service also has access to two named specialist Housing Officers in Luton Borough Council Housing Dept

Staffing of the YOS by Contract Type

Type of Contract	Strategic Manager (PT)	Strategic Manager (FT)	Operational Manager (PT)	Operational Manager (FT)	Practitioners (PT)	Practitioners (FT)	Administration (PT)	Administration (FT)	Total
Permanent		2		4	4.1	21		5	36.1
Commissioned by the service from other agencies						4			4
Temporary								1	1
Vacant					3.6			1	4.6
Seconded Children's Services									0
Seconded Probation						1			1
Seconded Police						1			1
Seconded Health (Substance misuse)									0
Seconded Health (Mental health)									0
Seconded Health (Physical health)					0.4				0.4
Seconded Health (Speech/language)									0
Seconded Education						1			1
Total	0	2	0	4	8.1	28	0	7	49.1
Disabled (self-classified)		1	1		1	1			4

Staffing of the YOS by Gender and Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Sessional		Student		Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
White British		2	1	3	5	17		3					1	5	7	30
White Irish						2								1	0	3
Other White															0	0
White & Black Caribbean						3								1	0	4
White & Black African															0	0
White & Asian															0	0
Other Mixed															0	0
Indian															0	0
Pakistani						1								1	0	2
Bangladeshi														1	0	1
Other Asian					1	1								1	1	2
Caribbean					1	3	1						1	2	3	5
African					1	1	1	1							2	2
Other Black															0	0
Chinese															0	0
Any other ethnic group															0	0
Total	0	2	1	3	8	28	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	12	13	49

Review of 2014 – 15

Over the last nine years Luton has consistently been a high performing service and received national recognition. However, there is no complacency as the service aims to continue striving for improvement in services to ensure strong outcomes for children and young people, a quality service to the courts and victims of youth crime. We aim to continue reducing the risk of offending and re-offending by children and young people in Luton and in doing so reduce the harm caused and help make Luton a safer environment for all.

Despite losing a significant proportion of the budget over recent years, the service has maintained a high standard of service delivery and performance. Through restructures in recent years we have been able to increase the number of staffing hours devoted to restorative justice approaches. Sustained performance resulting in a reduction in throughput has enabled the service to focus resources on those children and young people who pose the highest risk in terms of their reoffending, harm to the public and/or harm to themselves, as well as maintaining a preventative service.

2014 also saw the service move into new office accommodation with all staff based within the same building for the first time since 2002. The new accommodation, rented by the service from Luton Borough Council, provides a better environment for both staff and service users and is more economical to run.

Serious Youth Violence

The last year has seen a continued focus working with partners to address serious youth violence and gang affiliation by young people aged up to 25 years. A recent profile in Luton highlighted that young people engaged in violence also have a range of difficulties and we need to work with partners and the community to tackle some of the underlying causes and risk factors. A local strategic plan has been developed to address serious youth crime and gang related activity.

Within the service staff have received training to understand the issues associated with gang affiliation and to enhance their skills to work with these young people. Early in 2014 the YOS arranged and hosted a Luton conference on Serious Violent Crime by Young Adults and Young People. Presentations were heard from academics and from professionals working in other areas around the country with young people involved in gangs. The conference proved a resounding success with nearly 200 local professionals and other participants attending and providing overwhelmingly positive feedback.

'Just a note to congratulate Luton Youth Offending Service. The mix of people there was very impressive indeed. I have not been at an Ending Gangs & Youth Violence event where the Crown Prosecution Service, health , schools, early years as well as the usual services (YOS, Police, Probation, Youth Service, ASB et al) , were represented. And to have the LSCB opening and the PCC closing - every message you could have hoped for on partnership was evident.'

Feedback received from one of the national presenters at the conference Serious Violent Crime by Young Adults and Young People in Luton

'Fantastic informative day'..... 'A really good day!' 'Excellent conference, far above expectations' 'Great speakers!' 'Very thought provoking' 'Brilliant!' 'Very informative & eye opening' 'I thought the whole day was first class!' 'Insightful, well-constructed day' 'Inspirational speakers' 'Good to hear what is going on locally and nationally' 'Very worthwhile – academic to practical approaches' 'Brilliant and insightful day. Giving plenty of food for thought on how we need to move forward, ideas for the future'

Feedback from various participants at the conference Serious Violent Crime by Young Adults and Young People in Luton

The YOS is the lead agency for the Prevent strand of the Serious Youth Crime Strategy and has been instrumental in the setting up and developing the local Multi Agency Gangs Panel (MAGPan). The focus of the MAGPan is:

- To coordinate intervention and support activity in relation to identified individuals and, where appropriate, their families.
- To ensure appropriate action is being taken to safeguard individuals, their families and members of the public.

The stated aims and objectives of the MAGPan process are to:

- To minimise the risk of harm to the communities of Luton, particularly those most affected by serious violent crime and gang style activity.
- To provide effective safeguarding that maximises the safety of victims of serious violent crimes.
- To minimise the risk of harm to those who witness crimes related to serious violent crime.
- To actively share information between the partner agencies represented on the Multi-Agency Gang Panel
- To identify risks to and maximise the safety of multi agency staff engaged to make interventions with individuals involved in serious violent crime.
- To source and implement interventions which divert those at high risk of becoming involved in gang-related activity and serious violent crime.
- To take account of the specific issues around women and girls associated with gang and serious youth violence.
- Identify lead agencies to coordinate and oversee interventions to ensure effective interventions and positive outcomes to safeguard, reduce risk of harm and prevent and reduce reoffending.



'HOLD' Premier August 2014

August 2014 saw the culmination of months of work at the premiere of 'HOLD'; a DVD produced by young people in partnership with Recre8 to educate others on the use of guns and serious youth violence. The film premier took place at the local cinema in Luton and was attended by families and a broad range of representatives including the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police, members of the local Magistrates and Crown Court judiciary, Corporate Director Children & Learning Department Luton Borough Council and the Home Office commenting 'The 'HOLD' video developed by the YOS was referenced on numerous occasions as a useful tool to deliver key messages to young people.'¹¹ The young people participating showed great dedication and skill and received a standing ovation for their work! The DVD and associated workbook has now been issued to local police, schools and youth service as well as being a useful tool for work with other young people known to the YOS. The trailer for 'HOLD' can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbFZaV1iTWw>

¹¹ Home Office Ending Gang & Youth Violence Peer Review of Luton Sept 2014



'HOLD' Premier August 2014

The No Way Trust is a national educational charity set up in 1995, after the initial project more commonly known as Prison! Me! No Way! was formed in 1993. We have worked with The No Way Trust and an ex-offender who has served a sentence for murder following conviction under the legal doctrine known as joint enterprise. The ex-offender talks to young people known to the service about his background, brief details about his crime, victim empathy, impact his actions have had upon his life and his family's life and his future beyond custody. Sessions are aimed at helping young people to reject crime, stay safe, deal with life challenges and pursue a law abiding life and positively contribute to society.

Takeover Day

Takeover Day is a national event led by the Children's Commissioner for England. It offers children and young people the chance to work with adults and get involved in decision-making.

Young people known to the service once again made a significant contribution to Luton's Takeover Day. This service worked closely with Luton's Children & Young People's Participation Manager to consult with young people regarding the content of the day and general organisation. Young people known to the YOS chose two subjects to present: 'Second Chances' and 'Girls in Gangs'. On the day itself, the two groups performed their speeches and their raps to the professionals who were there, including the local authority Chief Executive and the Corporate Director of Children & Learning Department. The young people then managed individual workshops around the subjects of 'Girls & Gangs', 'Losing a friend' (peer bereavement), Enabling Abilities (what help do

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disabled young people need), Role Reversal (young carers), Second Chances and No Fixed Abode (Sofa surfing and hostel living). One young person was released on temporary licence from custody to participate.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Luton Youth Offending Service has identified an operational lead manager to champion the needs of children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and the service is fully integrated in strategies across the county of Bedfordshire, having built strong links with CSE and missing from home operational and strategic meetings, monitoring return to home interviews, and introducing measures to collect quantitative data in relation to young people known to the YOS who are victims, or suspected to be victims of CSE. The local CSE website can be viewed here www.bedfordshireagainstcse.org

Families

There have been considerable efforts to further expand our services to families and the last year has seen a number of evidence based parenting programmes and themed workshops being delivered. We have seen an increase in the number of parents accessing these provisions and particularly a significant number of fathers and families for whom English is not their first language. Feedback from participants has always been very positive.

The service also makes a very significant contribution to the local Stronger Families (known nationally as the Troubled Families initiative) initiative. Where families are known to the YOS the service undertakes any interventions normally provided by local the Stronger Families Team and has seen exceptionally good outcomes which have contributed to Luton being identified as an early adopter for Phase 2 of the government initiative.

Health and Young People

Research has consistently demonstrated that young people who offend have much higher levels of health needs than that of the general population of adolescents and they also tend to utilise services in times of crisis rather than using them in a primary or preventive way. The majority of young people who offend have health, education and social care needs which, if not met at an early age, can lead to a lifetime of declining health and worsening offending behaviour. There has been recent identification of the financial impact of serious youth violence and gang related behaviour which has been cited as more costly than that of all smoking related deaths and drug misuse.

A national policy recommendation is to maintain distinct provision regarding the health of young people known to the criminal justice system. Commissioning reforms have sought to provide opportunities to improve joint working between youth justice and healthcare services to make a real difference to children who offend.

By the virtue of their young age children and young people who come into contact with the Youth Offending Service are vulnerable. Many of these young people referred are further disadvantaged socially and educationally with many experiencing a range of emotional difficulties, especially children already in the care system. Many have complex health and support needs and Luton Youth Offending Service undertake a health screening on every young person referred. Identifying whether there is a mental health issue, learning disability, communication difficulties, drug and alcohol miss-use or other health need, each young person's needs are identified and discussed at an internal health panel. With a health team consisting of a YOS Nurse, Snr Community Mental Health Nurse, Drug and Alcohol Worker and a Speech and Language Therapist, each young person is assessed at panel and all the issues are identified to ensure that all their emotional and health needs are met as part of the intervention they receive from the Service.

In recent times, research and reports¹² have highlighted speech, language and communication difficulties experienced by young people in trouble with the law as a significant area of unmet need, and also that they may be more prevalent in the offending population than the general population. It is estimated that at least 60% of young people in the justice system have speech, language and communication needs. Luton Youth Offending Service has been fortunate to successfully acquire funding from the Department of Health to have a Speech and Language Therapist join the service until March 2017. Evidence suggests that improving the communication skills of offenders by providing targeted speech and language therapy significantly reduces the risk of reoffending. The CCG in Luton has been asked, as part of its statutory contribution to the service, to look at picking up funding for this post from April 2017.

Restorative Practice and Restorative Justice

Restorative Practice is what people do when they use the principles, values and practices of the philosophy of restorative justice in their everyday practice. Restorative Justice (RJ) is 'a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future' (Marshall, 1996:37). At its most efficient and effective, RJ resolves conflict and repairs harm through accountability from offenders and acknowledgement of the impact of their actions on others. RJ changes the conventional notions of crime being committed against the state, to those that focus on the victim and community where it occurred (Morris 2002). Luton Youth Offending Service operates from a Restorative Practice perspective as well as undertaking and facilitating Restorative Justice Processes.

The service contacts all victims of crime committed by children and young people known to the service. It is essential that victims have informed choice whether or not to participate in a restorative process. The service offers the opportunity for victims of youth crime to meet young people face to face, receive information on progress and/or to exchange views verbally or in writing as part of a

¹² Bercow Review (2008); Talbot J (2010) *Seen and Heard: Supporting vulnerable children in the youth justice system* London: Prison Reform Trust; Baker K, Jones S, Roberts C, Merrington S (2002) *The Validity and Reliability of Asset: Findings from the first two years of the use of Asset* Oxford: University of Oxford; HM Inspectorate of Probation (2010) *Message in a Bottle: A joint inspection of youth alcohol misuse and offending* Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation

shuttle mediation process. We will also sign post people to the wider support services of Victim Support and other organisations where that is appropriate.

March 2014 saw the service awarded the Restorative Services Quality Mark (RSQM) by the Restorative Justice Council. Luton Youth Offending Service was only the second Youth Offending Service nationally to be awarded the RSQM which is backed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and requires organisations to show that they are consistently meeting six Restorative Service Standards. Both the standards and the RSQM were developed in consultation with experts and practitioners in the restorative field as part of the Ministry of Justice's Restorative Justice Action Plan 2012. The RSQM demonstrates that Luton YOS, through independent review, is delivering good quality, safe, sustainable restorative services.

Performance

Luton Youth Offending Service continually strives to ensure our goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner. We aim to align our resources, systems and staff to meet our strategic objectives and priorities. The service is proud of its nine year history of high performance and strong outcomes for children, young people, families and victims of youth crime. However, with reducing budgets and resources it is paramount to ensure we are able to maintain this as we move forward.

REDUCING FIRST TIME ENTRANTS TO THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

The primary aim of the youth justice system is to prevent youth offending, and the effectiveness of the system is therefore judged in part on its progress in reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time. This service seeks to drive down these numbers via voluntary interventions targeted at young people judged to be at risk of offending, and responding to minor offending in an informal way.

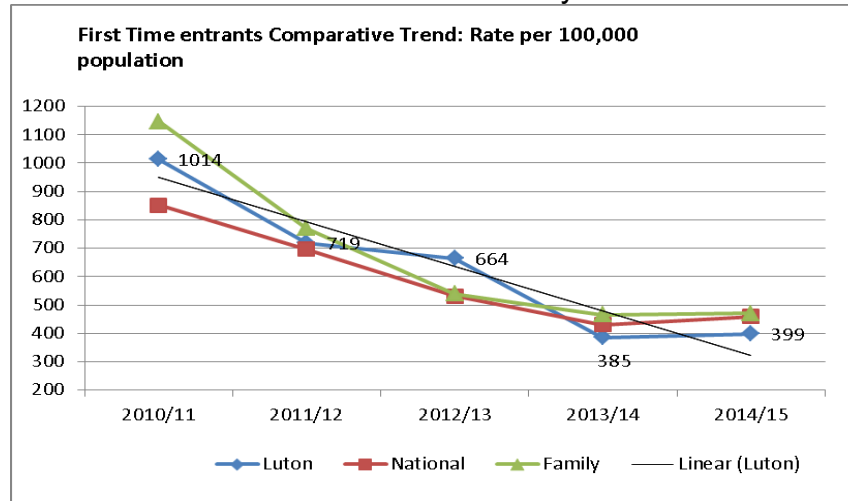
There is now a good understanding of the risk factors which increase the likelihood of a young person offending, based on over 30 years research in the UK, United States and other countries. Professor Brian Littlechild¹³ has listed the key factors associated with youth offending: poor education and employment prospects; inconsistent parenting; poor housing or homelessness; poor physical and mental health; poor access to financial resources; peer pressure; anti-social behaviour; drug and alcohol abuse; and difficulties in forming and sustaining relationships.

During the last year Luton has maintained the steep reductions achieved over the previous 5 year period and based on provisional data been able to outperform the national average using the rate per 100,000 monitor.

Luton has recorded a marginal annual incline, which suggests that further significant reduction will be challenging; but this incline is marginal 4% incline with what are now quite low numbers – from 82 up to 85 young people in the year

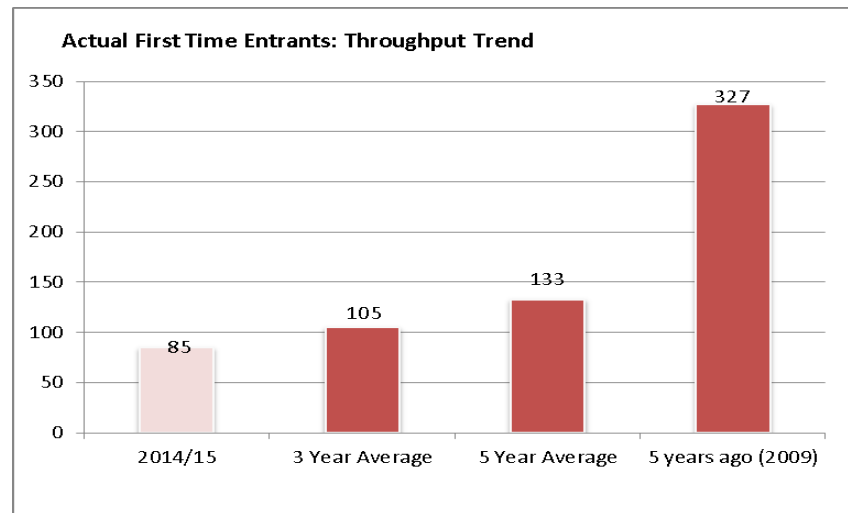
¹³ House of Commons Justice Committee, Youth Justice, Seventh Report of Session 2012-13. Published 14 March 2013

Fig 1: First time entrants to the Youth Justice System national indicator



Analysis against 3 year and 5 year benchmarks (Fig 2) further underlines the context of Luton’s progress. The reduction in first time entrants (FTE) is sustained by a local ‘early alert’ process whereby staff undertake a triage assessment on all young people from Luton who are arrested and brought to Luton Police Station. Where appropriate, support and intervention for the young person and their family is offered by the YOS and this has proved effective in diverting young people from further problematic behaviour.

Fig 2: Actual numbers of first time entrants in Luton

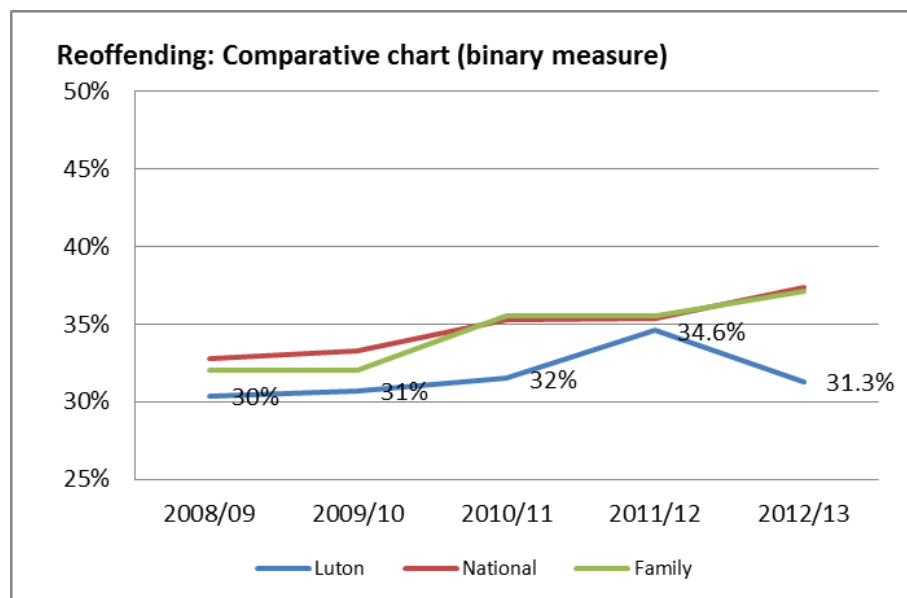


REDUCING RE-OFFENDING BY CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ALREADY IN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

The continuing reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system has meant that those who do receive a formal criminal justice outcome have complex needs both as individuals and as families requiring more intensive and wide ranging interventions. These young people tend to be the more entrenched offenders within the system and often more challenging to work with. This reflects the national position where as the overall rate of re-offending has risen in the last few years, the number of young people in the re-offending cohort has gone down, with particular reductions among those with no previous offences and those receiving pre-court (eg: caution & conditional cautions) disposals.

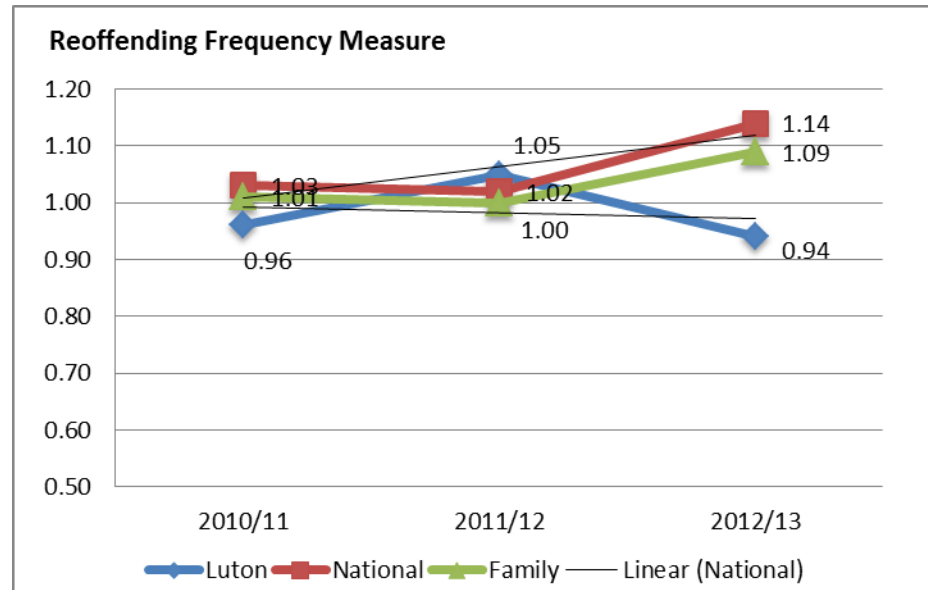
The latest national data against 2012/13¹⁴ cohort revealed extremely positive outcomes for Luton against both the main measures of further proven reoffending. In terms of the binary measure (has the young person reoffended or not regardless of how serious or prolific that reoffending was) reoffending levels declined from 34.6% in March 2012 to 31.3% in Sept 2013. This compares to 37.4% nationally. (Fig 3). This local performance is reinforced by data indicating the number of further offences committed by young people under 18 years was an average of 0.94 offences per young person compared to 1.14 nationally (Fig 4).

Fig 3: Reoffending by young people already in the Youth Justice System national indicator



¹⁴ Proven Reoffending Statistics Bulletin, Ministry of Justice/YJB 31/7/15

Fig 4: Average frequency of offending by young people under 18 years



Local analysis of reoffending cohorts during this year have spotlighted emerging characteristics of further offending behaviour:

- A prolific core of between 10-15% of the whole cohort that accounts for 40% of all further offending.
- Early reoffending following the imposition of an order or disposal before any intervention by the service has impacted on behaviour - 45% of all young people who reoffend do so within the first 3 months.
- Positively young people in receipt of interventions on Referral Orders and Youth Rehabilitation Orders recorded lower levels of further offending than national equivalents.
- However there appears to be a high level of young people that go onto offend where they haven't received an intervention from the service
- 61% of those that go onto commit further offences that are either the same or of a lesser seriousness.

Further analytical work will be undertaken to enable the service and its partners to learn more about offending and reoffending trends locally so that service planning and provision can be suitably focused and identify where earlier intervention by ourselves and other partner agencies may have prevented an escalation into crime.

REMANDS INTO THE SECURE ESTATE

2014/15 offending activity resulted in a second consecutive annual rise of remands into the secure estate. The rising level of secure remands can be attributed to three significant incidents with links to gang affiliated criminal activity. This is probably the first time in more than a decade that a concentration of such visible 'Gang' activity has significantly affected Luton performance.

The three year period between 2011-14 Luton averaged 16 new secure remand episodes relating to 13 young people. The rise for 2014/15 is illustrated by the 21 new episodes against 18 young persons. However, trend analysis suggests that 2014/15 could yet be considered an outlier rather than a firm indication of offending behaviour in Luton.

Comparative data released for 2010-2014 period places Luton 4th of 10 amongst comparative authorities used to benchmark Luton's performance profile.

The YOS and Luton Borough Council Children's Social Care are exploring more effective ways of early identification of individuals who could be at risk of remand in the future. By developing pro-active, rather than reactive, ways of monitoring young people and the use of the secure estate, interventions can be put in place to prevent the inevitability of custody for some young people.

Analysis of secure remand outcomes (available to end of June 2015) shows that these outcomes broadly match national data with fewer than 40% of all episodes resulting in a custodial sentence. Thus approximately 60% are remanded to the secure estate but do not receive a secure outcome on sentence leading us to conclude that further work is necessary to look at our triage and bail services as well as further discussions with our local judiciary to identify developments to service provision that may limit remands to the secure estate to those young people where a custodial outcome is most likely.

Other factors identified in our secure remand cohort include:

- 2 young persons had previously received secure remands; indicating this is a new cohort of 'high-end' offenders.
- Average age of young persons within this cohort is 16.4 years.
- Those that have received a formal youth justice disposal were aged, on average, 14.5 years at point of entering the Youth Justice system; this is significant as it reinforces similar findings with some local reoffending analysis work undertaken in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner, police and probation.

Fig 5: Number of young people remanded to the secure estate

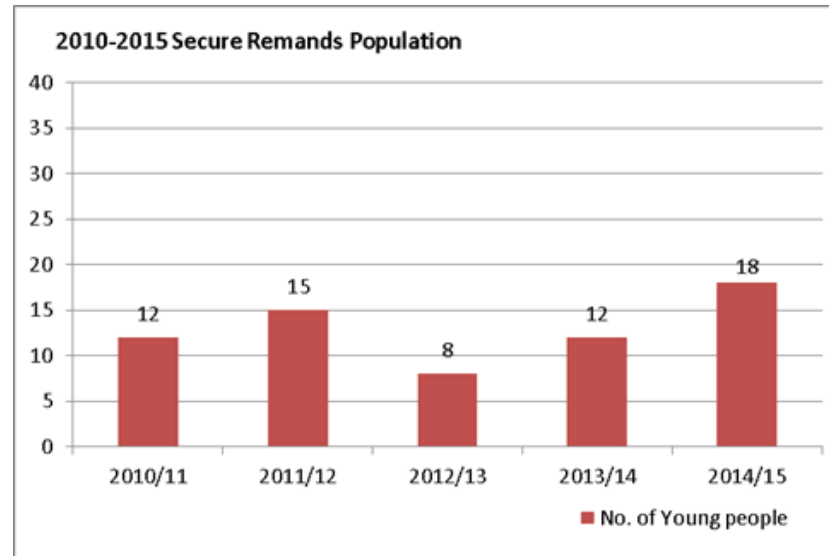


Fig 6: Sentence outcomes following period of secure remand

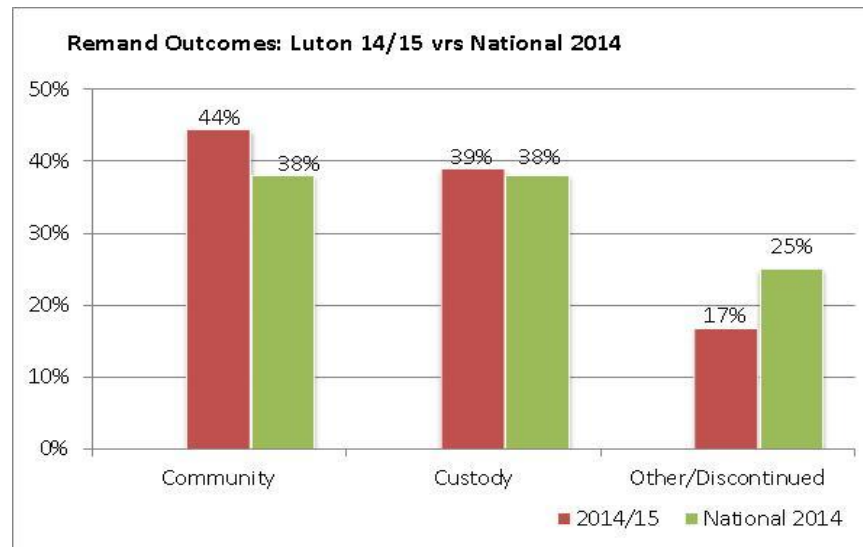
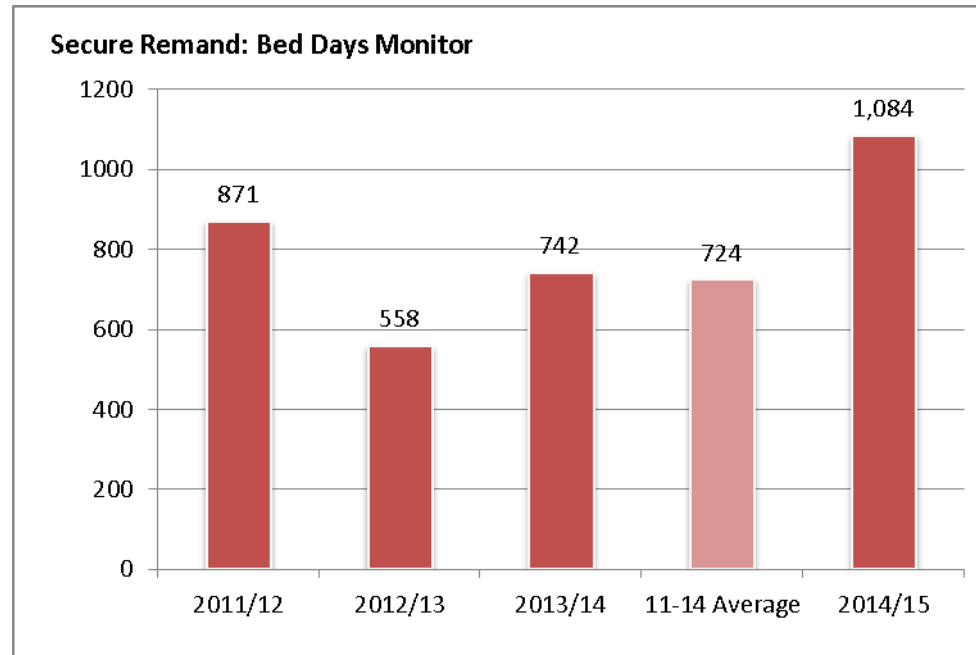


Fig 7: Total number of days spent in secure estate facility by all young people from Luton, national indicator



CUSTODIAL SENTENCING

The last two years have resulted in a steep rise of custodial sentences corresponding to a period where national and comparative neighbour's outturns continue to see reduced outcomes.

Examination of the three year period from 2012-15 shows robbery as the main offence accounting for 49% of custodial orders, followed by Violence Against Person¹⁵ at 20%. This trend is compounded by the analysis of all offences in Luton that indicate a larger number of robbery offences compared to national; 15% v 4%.

13 of 22 orders (59%) resulted from offences related to serious youth crime compared to 7 out of 10 custodial outcomes for the 2013/14 reporting period.

¹⁵ Violence against the person offences can be very broad ranging from minor to very serious assaults

Positively there was a reduction in custodial sentences resulting from breach of community orders, from the 40% levels in previous 2 years compared to just 18% of new custodial orders in 2014/15.

The service continues to work closely with the local authority housing and social care departments to ensure clear partnership work to address the needs of children and young people leaving the secure estate and resettling into their local communities.

Fig 8: Rate of custodial sentences national indicator

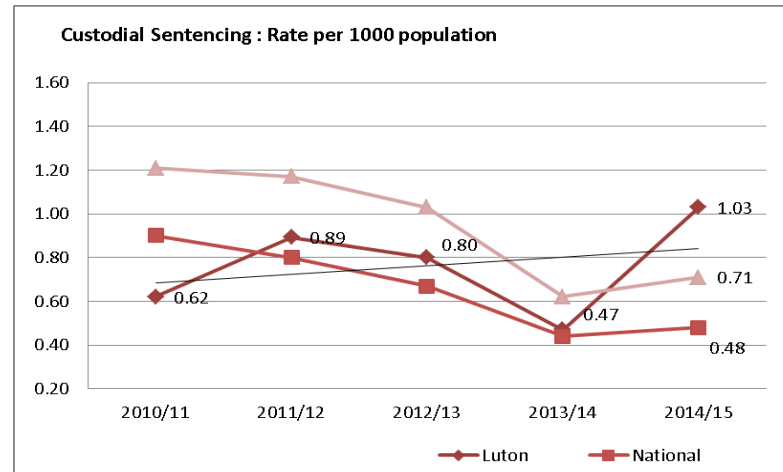
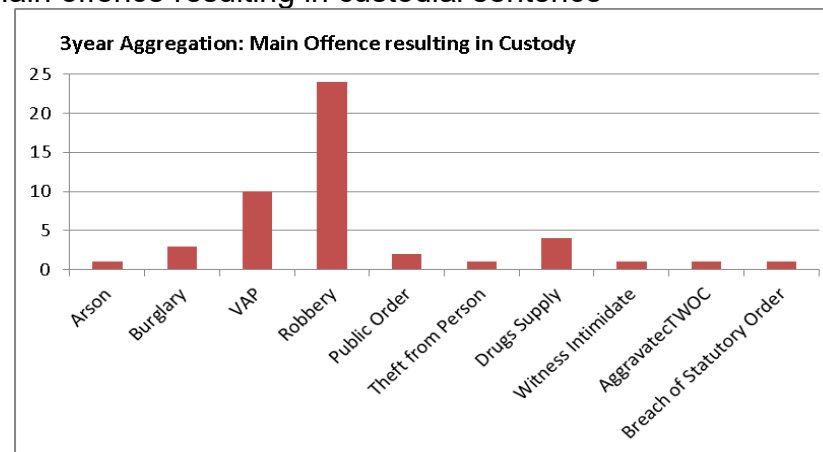


Fig 9: Main offence resulting in custodial sentence

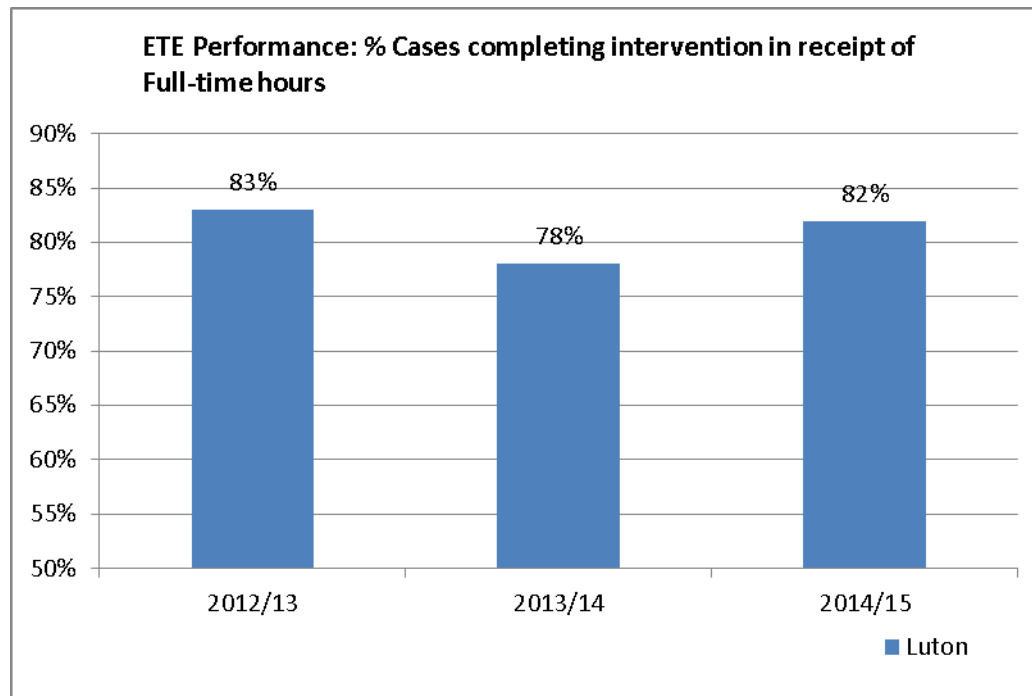


EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

The importance of full participation in school and college life for young people's personal and social development cannot be overestimated. This along with the attainment of the vital skills and qualifications for employment are widely recognised as major protective factors in preventing children becoming offenders, and in reducing the longer term risks of reoffending.

Although education and training is delivered direct in custodial establishments to the minority of young people who go to custody, the vast majority of young people who offend or who are at risk of offending are dealt with in the community. The challenge therefore is to ensure that young people are sustained and supported in their education when they enter the system or re-engaged if they were not accessing provision before they became known to the service. The key to re-engagement is working with mainstream providers such as schools, colleges and training providers to ensure that young people can access and sustain learning.

Fig 10: Young people in full time education, training or employment by the end of their intervention with the service



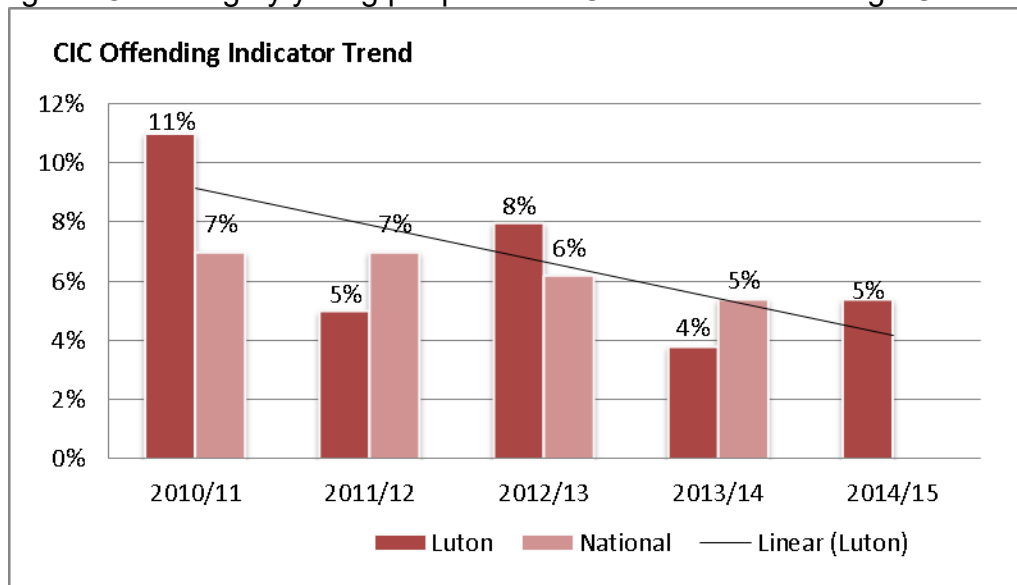
Historically Luton has consistently achieved upper quartile status in comparison against other Youth Offending Services both nationally and comparative family services though this comparative data is no longer available. The data for 2013/14 relates to 97 out of 119 statutory orders where the young person has been in fulltime education, training or employment at the end of their order.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Provisional data regarding offending levels for 2014/15 have consolidated strong performance from the previous year. Prior to 2012 it was common for offending by young people in the Care of Luton Borough Council to be higher than the national average. However, it now stands at more than half its previous level.

The entrenched offending behaviour of a small number of young people remains of concern they have a continued presence amongst high end cohorts of young people who offend. There has been considerable work with partners to address the issues around the disproportionate numbers of children and young people in Care within the Youth Justice system. We have advocated for the Corporate Parenting & Partnership Board to adopt a number of performance indicators so that there is closer scrutiny of the issues and have been instrumental in driving forward a multi-agency action plan to reduce offending of this group of children and young people.

Fig 11: Offending by young people in the Care of Luton Borough Council



NB: Data for 2014/15 is provisional

Priorities for 2015 – 16

Our priorities going forward continue to be to ensure Luton is a safe place to grow up, live and work in and to enable children and young people to make a positive contribution to their communities and achieve positive outcomes for themselves. These priorities are drawn from national research and national performance indicators, alongside local data and priorities identified across the partnership. The priorities take account of local partnership and inspection actions plans.

In achieving our priorities we aim to:

- Reduce the number of children and young people entering the youth justice system for the first time and ensure our diversion and prevention programmes are targeted at the right young people
- Reduce re-offending by children and young people already in the youth justice system in terms of frequency and seriousness
- Reduce the number of young people being remanded or sentenced to the secure estate by providing strong effective bail packages and community sentences
- Protect the public and support victims including the increased use of restorative justice
- Promote the safety and welfare of children and young people at risk of entering or who are in the youth justice system

In order to achieve our priorities we will:

- The Chief Officer Board and local authority Chief Executive will explore how services can be maintained going forward in light of the severe financial difficulties
- Continue to strive to improve practice through effective and appropriate staff training. Training in the forth coming year will be focused on the new ASSET Plus assessment tool, desistance, managing risk and vulnerability, assessment and analysis, risk and safeguarding. This will improve the quality of our risk and vulnerability assessments and their transformation into effective programmes of intervention
- Improve the quality of our risk and vulnerability assessments and their transformation into effective programmes of intervention
- Ensure our triage services to the local police station in Luton when children and young people are arrested are robust and diversion and prevention services are suitably targeted.
- Review and improve our management oversight of case work and quality assurance processes especially around risk and safeguarding issues.
- Increase our analysis work regarding understanding crime trends, reoffending, feedback from service users, effective interventions and use this data to inform future service delivery by ourselves and by our partners

- Work in partnership with the YJB (Youth Justice Board) regarding the implementation of the forthcoming revised national assessment framework ASSET Plus due to be operational in Luton from December 2015.
- Further develop restorative justice approaches and aim to have practitioners within the service accredited with the Restorative Justice Council.
- Continue to develop and promote a 'whole family' approach by practitioners and make a significant contribution to the Stronger Families (Troubled Families) Programme in Luton
- Develop a formal partnership with the University of Bedfordshire to co-operate in a broad range of areas and to work together for mutual benefit.
- Continue to work in close partnership with other agencies and the community to address the risks of children and young people being drawn into behaviour involving weapons and 'gangs' and to respond appropriately to those already involved in gang style behaviour.
- Continue to contribute to the pan Bedfordshire work to ensure services, including the YOS, are effective in identifying and protecting children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Further develop work with the local authority Children & Learning Department to review and embed working practices to avoid unnecessary remands to the secure estate and to ensure those who are so remanded receive suitable support and exit strategies.
- Review relevant thematic and other inspection reports and devise and implement action plans to ensure Luton applies the relevant learning
- Undertake a joint review of our transition arrangements for those young people turning 18
- Work in partnership with other agencies to implement the recommendations and actions in the multi-agency Children in Care Action Plan in order to reduce the disproportionality issues.
- Explore with the local authority and the Chief Officer Board the feasibility and benefits of the Head of Youth Offending Service managing the local authority youth service provision in addition to this service. There are clear links across the two services, and especially in relation to work with young people at risk of gang related crime, that make this a sensible area for exploring regardless of financial pressures.

In addition to the above the service will be utilising new funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to extend the work we do in partnership with victims to include young victims of adult crime

Risks to Future Delivery

In 2011 the service underwent a major restructure as a result of changing responsibilities and approx. 30% reduction to the pooled budget. Essentially this restructure deleted a number of very specialist posts and created some more generic Youth Justice Assistant posts. A further, albeit small, reorganisation took place in 2013 and again deleted some remaining specialist posts in favour of more generic ones. From this point forward the service has focused on its statutory functions only.

Since 2013 Luton Borough Council has decreased its contribution by a further £800K (approx.), £400k of that reduction taking effect from 1 April 2015. Whilst historically LBC have over contributed to the YOS (compared to other known % contributions nationally) the local authority is now in line with percentage contributions in other areas. Bedfordshire Police are the only other statutory partner to make a cash contribution to the pooled budget.

The pooled budget covers office accommodation costs (office space is rented from the local authority), staffing, activities etc with young people, commissioned services and all other running costs.

Whilst the service has made strenuous and effective measures to ensure efficient working practices and to reduce non-essential spending the remaining pooled budget is now under significant strain. Strong budget management by the Head of Service and Chief Officer Board has over time ensured that the service has a healthy reserve pot. This has been planned overtime with a view to ensuring the following:

- a. The service is financially viable through the current economic climate
- b. The service is able to respond to the needs of Luton eg: the recent serious youth crime issues without having to call on partners for additional funding including the requirement to ensure all staff are suitably trained in up to date youth justice provision
- c. The service is able to finance required upgrades of IT and software to enable it to meet its statutory requirements eg: updates to the Childview computer system
- d. To enable the service to withstand late notification of budget streams each year – most notably the YJB Good Practice Grant and the PCC's Community Safety Grant
- e. To ensure the service has funds to manage any future reorganisation and any future redundancy obligations are met.

In late July 2015 the Youth Justice Board also notified us that there could be a further 14% in year cut on the Good Practice Grant we have been allocated.

As a result of a further reductions this financial year coupled with a reduction in the Youth Justice Grant, the service is looking at a significant overspend which will be met by the reserves. However, this cannot be a long term solution as the reserves will have been depleted by March 2017. Therefore the status quo going forward is not an option and the YOS Chief Officer Board needs to consider how the Youth Offending Service will look going forward to ensure Luton continues to be able to meet its statutory responsibilities to the community of Luton. Thus the financial situation is by far the most critical risk to future service provision.

Serious youth crime and particularly violent crime pose the greatest risk in terms of increased use of the secure estate and reoffending so continued strong partnership work and engagement with local communities will prove critical going forward. Detailed analysis of reoffending rates will be undertaken to identify common factors which may assist both the service and partner agencies to halt the current include in reoffending rates.

Conclusion

During 2015 - 2016 we aim to build on the successes of recent years. Although the service is severely financially stretched and the Chief Officer Board and local authority Chief Executive need to consider how the service can be maintained going forward, we will continue to strive to ensure our performance is maintained and outcomes for children, young people and the community continue to be positive. We will maintain an emphasis on preventing offending by children and young people and on reducing the reoffending of those already within the criminal justice system. We will continue to work alongside partners, who remain fully supportive, to ensure we play our part in making Luton a more positive place to live, work and grow up.

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