

1 June 2021		ITEM: 6
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Update on the Youth Offending Service, Youth Justice Plan and the role of the Service for Children Looked After		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Report of: Clare Moore, Strategic Lead Youth Offending Service and Prevention		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon Interim Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help.		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report gives an overview of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and the impact that the Pandemic has had on the Courts and service delivery. This report will set out the six strategic priorities identified by the Youth Crime Governance Board (YCGB) for the Youth Justice Plan, 2021-2024. The report will also provide information and data on the role of the YOS with Children Looked After.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Members note the contents of this report and consider the continued improvements made.**
- 1.2 For Members to identify any specific areas that they would like additional information for any subsequent reports**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** The YOS is based in Corringham, close to the Town Centre. It is fully staffed with experienced permanent workers and a number of seconded staff from the Probation Service, Inspire Youth, Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services (EWMHS), Drug and Alcohol Service, Essex Police and Speech and Language Therapists. The Team also has a specialist Gangs and Child Exploitation Worker, who works alongside Children's Social Care.
- 2.2** The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that the YOS has had to deliver services to young people in different ways for the last year, as the office base had been closed for long periods of time. The YOS have been

creative to ensure that young people have been able to complete the work for their Court Orders and have every chance not to repeat offending behaviours.

2.3 Every 3 years, the Youth Crime Governance Board has to complete a Strategic Plan for the Youth Justice Board of England and Wales, as part of the grant agreement. The priorities for the next three years are:

- Violence and Vulnerability
- Education, Training and Employment
- Diversion and Out of Court Disposals
- Early Help and Prevention
- Effective Partnerships
- Evidence Based Practice

Two themes are evident within the six priorities; these themes focus on the disproportionality of BAME youths and looked after children within the criminal justice system.

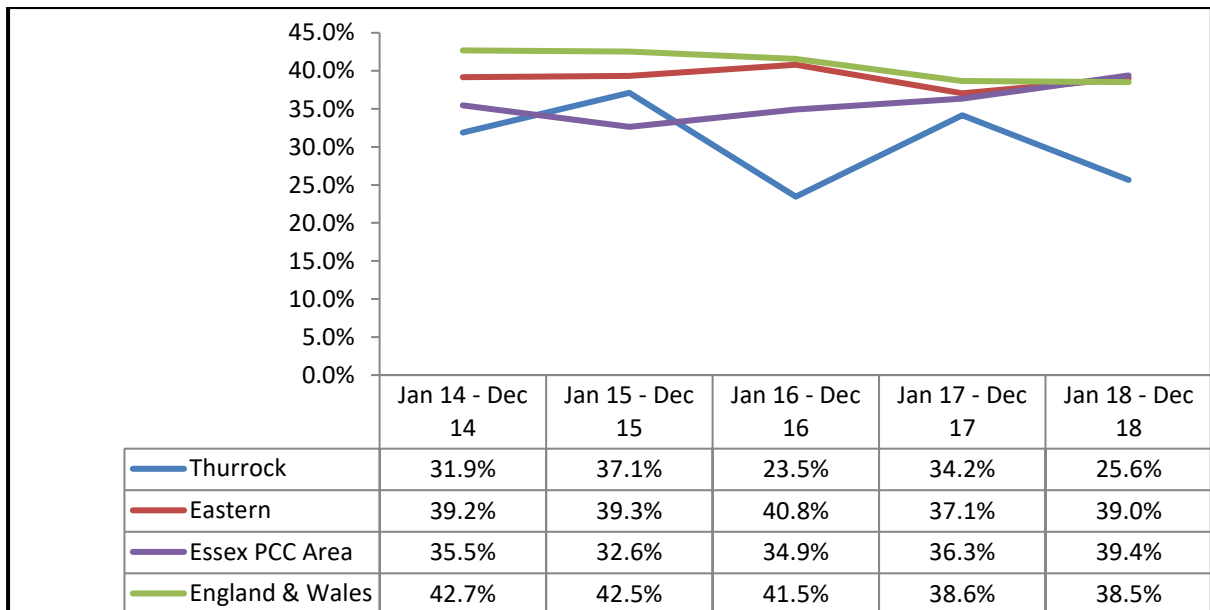
3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Re-offending – Ministry of Justice (MOJ) data

	Thurrock	South East	Essex	Family	England
Quarterly (latest data)	25%	38.5%	34.5%	38.2%	37.1%
Aggregated yearly	25%	39%	39.4%	38.2%	37.1%

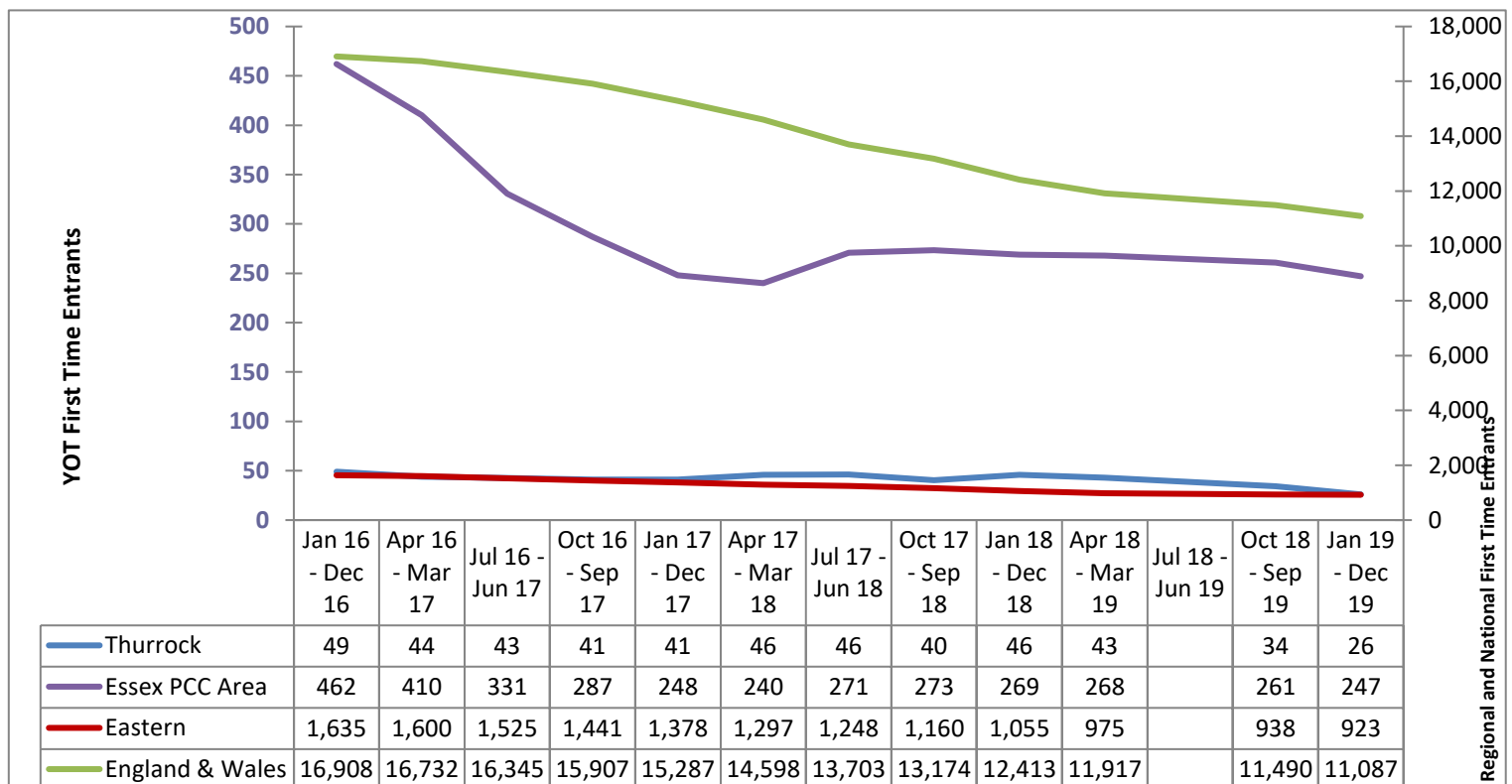
3.2 The table above shows the latest, published, re-offending data by the Ministry of Justice. This is for April 2019 - March 2020, published in April 2021. Thurrock YOS continues to outperform all of its comparators and is over 10% below the national average.

3.3 Thurrock YOS also reports on local data and this is the performance that is recorded on the corporate score card. This data is dynamic and is a good predictor of future MOJ published data. It identifies and tracks a cohort of children for a period of 12 months. There is a 3 month drag on this data to allow for the criminal justice process. As of Quarter three 2020 – 21, the re-offending rate is **7%**. This figure is accumulative through the tracked period.



Thurrock is a small YOS and consequently has a small quarterly and yearly cohort compared to most YOS', therefore annual data can be erratic. Performance remains good with Thurrock outperforming all comparators and being below the national average since 2014 - 2015.

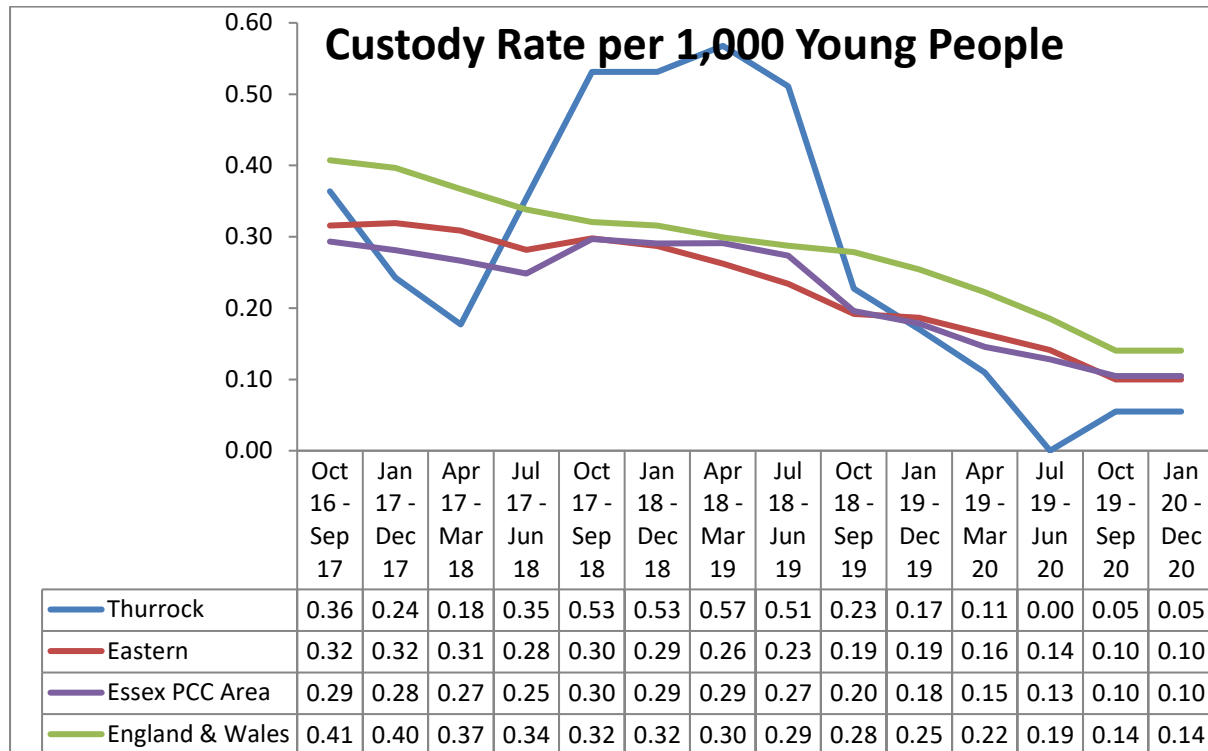
3.4 First Time entrants Jan 2019 - Dec 2019



First time entrants were relatively static for some time as a result of the introduction of preventative services in 2011. However, this financial year has

seen initially the closure of the Youth Courts, as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and then a delay in processing cases to conclusion. This meant a reduction for the first two quarters. Latest indications from Essex Court Service state that there is a 117% back log in the overall court system, although this figure is not exclusive to youth cases.

3.5 Use of Custody



The final custody figure for 2020/21 was 0.05 (per 1000 young people) which is below the national average of 0.14 per and our identified comparators. This only applies to those young people sentenced to custody and not those remanded/made subject to Youth Detention Accommodation.

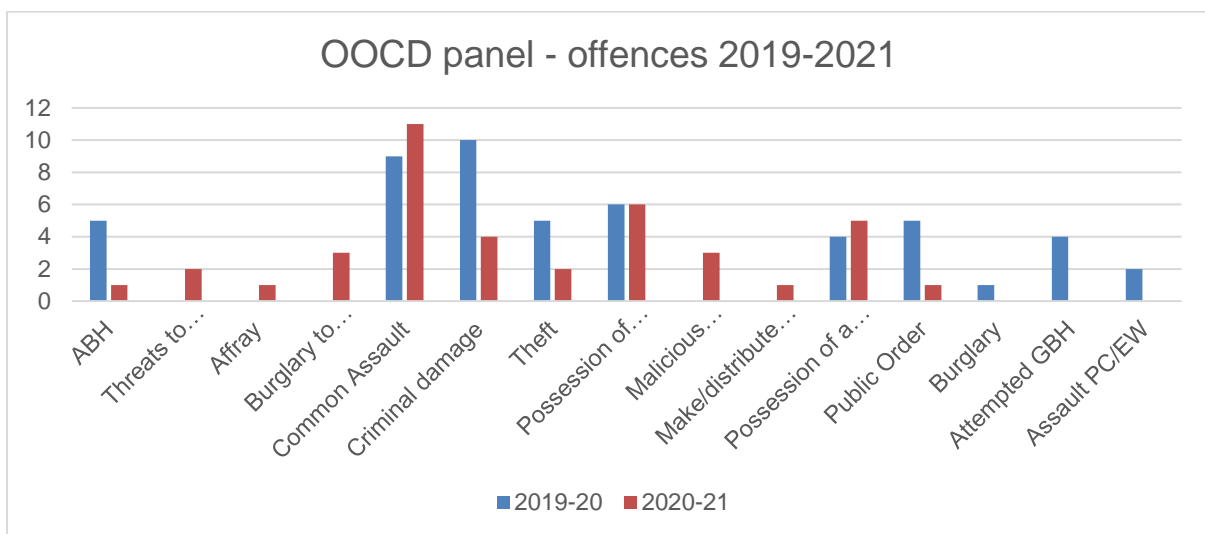
Since this data was finalised, 2 young people have received custodial sentences and 3 young people have been remanded in custody awaiting trial. Whilst on remand, these young people are classified as Children Looked After.

3.6 Children Looked After

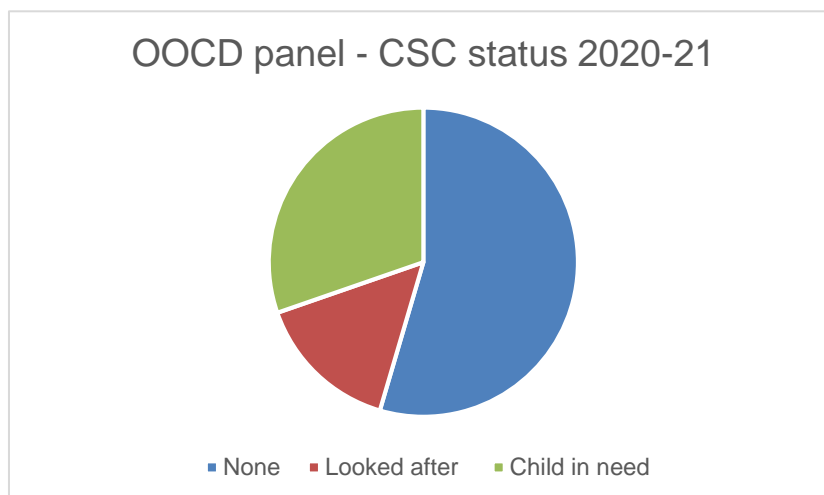
Children looked after (15) accounted for 20% of statutory outcomes in 2019-20. This figure has remained static for 2020-21. There is no nationally published comparator for the period, but Children Looked After remain over represented, despite the introduction of a national protocol to reduce the criminalisation of Children Looked After. During the period 2020/2021, one Child Looked After was made subject to a custodial sentence and three children have achieved a looked after status, because of youth detention accommodation (remand). These are included in the data.

3.7 Out of Court Disposals

- The Out Of Court Disposal (O OCD) panel is a multiagency panel that aims to divert children from future involvement in the criminal justice system in the best interests of the child and the criminal justice system. It will make decisions in respect of children who have made full admissions to committing low level offences and who are not serious or prolific offenders.
- Offences deemed suitable for an Out Of Court Disposal are those offences, which have a Gravity score of 1, 2 or 3 (low to medium in seriousness of offence). Offences which are Gravity score 4 (medium to high in seriousness) will continue to be excluded unless in exceptional circumstances and will be referred to the CPS for a charging decision



During 2020-21, the O OCD panel dealt with 43 offences relating to 33 children. In line with Court ordered interventions, the most common offences were those under the violence against the person act. It should be noted that the period in question, and particularly the throughput, was initially affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This is the first year we have had comparative data in relation out of court disposals.



3.8 Out of Court Disposal Panel - Social Care Status

44% of the children were open to Children's Social Care at the time of the offence. 10 with Children in need status, 5 with Looked After status (were CLA at the time of the offence). Concerns were raised at the presentation of the Q2 data as to whether Children Looked After were receiving the same opportunities for diversion away from the criminal justice system as the general population. This has now increased to 15% from 0% in Q2, which is an improvement.

3.9 The Youth Justice Plan (YJP) 2021 - 2024 has recently been signed off by the Youth Crime Governance Board and the delivery of the Plan will be monitored via the Board.

The Plan sets out our strategic priorities and the following vision for the Thurrock Youth Justice Partnership:

- Thurrock YJP recognises the needs of the children it works with and will increase their resilience by providing a multi-agency response designed to prevent offending, safeguard children and protect the community.
- The Youth Justice Board maintain their vision that identifies children as children and highlights the need to build on their strengths to allow them to make a constructive contribution to society.
- Thurrock YJP shares the YJB vision and remains committed to the Youth Justice Aims set out in the current YJB strategic plan which underpins our strategic priorities.
- A child first approach is central to the YJB's vision alongside effective prevention which focuses on the child's needs and strengths. Thurrock YJP will continue to promote a child first approach and develop its diversion services in line with the YJB's values.
- People remain a priority for Thurrock Council where partnerships work together to improve health and well-being and this remains integral to our vision as the demography of the borough continues to change along with its offending cohort and nature of offending.
- The Plan sets out the main areas of focus and activity against priorities that are realistic in the current environment. Similarly, this plan takes into account the reduction in resources.
- The work of Thurrock YOS set out within this plan is directly linked to the priority to reduce overall levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in line with the local Community Safety Partnership targets. There is also a close alignment to the local Public Health plan around violence and vulnerability

Please refer to Appendix 1 - Plan on a Page.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Corporate Parenting Committee to note and comment on the performance of the Youth Offending Service in relation to looked after children and the contents of the Youth Justice Plan 2021-2024.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Not applicable

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 None

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

The increase in Remand costs will have an impact on the Youth Offending Team budget for 2021/2022, as it had for 2020/2021. The costs are unavoidable, as the Courts make these decisions.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

The Council has a statutory duty under Section 40(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to submit an annual youth justice plan which sets out:

- How out justice services in their area are to be provided and funded
- How the youth offending team will be composed and funded, how it will operate and what functions it will carry out.

The provision of youth justice is subject to National Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System. The Youth Justice Board is responsible for oversight of these standards.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
Strategic Lead: Community Development and Equalities

Although the number of looked after children that go into custody is relatively small, we know that they are significantly overrepresented. A recent survey of young people in custody, suggested that as much as one third of boys and nearly two thirds of girls have been in the care system at some point in their lives. We also know that children with care experience entering custody have particular needs. A thematic inspection undertaken by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) identified that young people with care experience were more likely to report problems on arrival in custody, have substance misuse problems, and emotional and mental health problems. It is therefore important to consider whether current custodial services are responsive to the particular needs of this cohort and that they continue to receive support from their corporate parent.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children)

The delays in the Court processes due to Covid-19 has had an impact on when the YOS provide interventions and support to young people. Some young people have been waiting up to 2 years for Sentencing in Court, causing delay in interventions and in some cases increases in offending behaviours.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report**

- Data Report of Jason Read April 2021
- Youth Justice Plan 2021-2024 to be published on the Council website, once approved by the Youth Justice Board

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Youth Justice Plan 2021-2024 Plan on a Page

Report Author:

Clare Moore

Strategic Lead Youth Offending Service and Prevention

Children and Family Services