



Working in partnership to support young people, families and victims to prevent offending and reduce re-offending to build a safer and stronger community."



WARWICKSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

This recovery plan is prepared in accordance with Youth Justice Board guidance which has recognised the pressures face by YOTs during the COVID-19 Pandemic. In response to this pressure the annual requirement to prepare a full Youth Justice Plan has been modified to the expectation of a high level COVID Recovery Plan which will, for the year of 2020/21 satisfy Youth Justice Board Conditions of Grant.

Warwickshire Youth Justice Service (YJS) is managed by the County Council and the recent provision of improved hardware and software facilities greatly assisted the whole response to the Pandemic both operationally and strategically.

A. SUMMARY OF COVID-19 IMPACT AND CONTEXT OF THIS RECOVERY PLAN

1. Governance And Strategic Alignment

1.1 Since the imposition of lockdown arrangements in March 2020, the Youth Justice Chief Officer Board has continued with its work and has met virtually in accordance with the cycle of dates that were already in place. The meeting early in June 2020 was well attended by the range of statutory partners and other colleagues. As well as reviewing the YJS Business Continuity plan, the June Board received a spotlight report from a YJS Social Worker on the realities of working with young people in the COVID-19 context, approved the budget for the forthcoming year, discussed the latest quarterly performance report and reviewed the recently prepared 'Standards for Youth Justice' audit and its implications. A key feature in our development of the Strategic Board has been to ensure that there is an awareness and engagement with practice, and this is also enhanced by Board members taking the opportunity to sit alongside Operational Managers in a case audit process and 'visit'/shadow practice.

The Chair of our Board is the local Director of Children's Services and at all times through the pandemic there has been a strategic drive to ensure the safety and well-being needs of our children and young people, staff, volunteers and our partners are considered as paramount.

- 1.2 Strategically the YJS has continued to attend and contribute to local partnerships and initiatives. The Service Manager for Youth Justice has continued to chair the Local Criminal Justice Board, attend the Safeguarding partnership, contribute to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation, enhanced local drives to address concerns about the impact of domestic abuse during the COVID pandemic, YJS has actively participated in the development of the Tactical 'Serious and Organised Crime Joint Action Group' which seeks to drive improvements in the response to youth violence and other concerns such as County Lines. This trend and concern had been recognised in our Chief Officer Board as part of performance reports, and these developments are a welcome part of the move forward to a more effective partnership approach.

2. Operational Service Delivery

- 2.1 The Warwickshire YJS COVID Business Continuity Plan set out the risk assessed and realistic ways of operational working, with the aim of retaining contact and oversight of some of the most challenging and vulnerable children and young people in our County. In accordance with early guidance, staff became less office based and worked remotely from home with the emphasis on retaining contact with young people either virtually or in person on a socially distanced basis. Where face to face contact was deemed necessary, these events regularly occurred in open public spaces eg parks, in gardens, or on neighbourhood walks. The early issue of Personal Protective Equipment facilitated those contacts that were deemed necessary in person, and these decisions were led by a risk and need led assessment in accordance with pre-existing ASSETplus assessments, which were refreshed in response to any significant changes in circumstances and aligned in

accordance with safe COVID-19 practice. The YJS worked to increase and enhance its resource library of software based working resources to facilitate remote working with young people. Experience found that most young people responded positively to remote working and utilising software resources to review their thinking and behaviour.

2.2 A key challenge for the YJS was the impact of COVID-19 on Court listings and workflow. The partnership is aware of the continued backlog of work in the Courts system and there is concern about the number of alleged young offenders awaiting Court hearings or Released Under Investigation by the Police. The local YJS nominated a single point of contact (SPOC) to negotiate with the local HMCTS regarding listings and developments in the roll out of modified Court Services. A key feature locally is an appreciation of the efforts to accommodate and prioritise listings in dialogue with YJS, but the impact of the pandemic on Court efficiency remains quite profound. It is also of note that local Courts did respond to any urgent request for Warrant or Breach proceedings, which has meant that risk and safety management has remained a key joint endeavour. As HMCTS move towards greater throughput of cases in the Court, the local YJS has plans in place to address the anticipated surge in demand created by the backlog.

2.3 COVID-19 lockdown coincided with the development of the Black Lives Matter movement. Staff meetings and checking discussions have provided opportunities for team members to share thoughts, feelings and experiences, but also reflect on Service Delivery to our small BAME population. As part of the C&F Directorate response to BLM, YJS is contributing to a study, the first component of which will look at disproportionality in our system. This reflects both the recent BLM developments but also the drive for change in our SFYJ audit and action planning

- 2.4 Given the size of the County, the very low level of new demand in the early stages of the pandemic and the demograph of our Referral Order Panel members, there was a need to modify our Panel process during the pandemic. The start of the pandemic coincided with the appointment of a Coordinator post designed to focus on the development and oversight of our Panel work. Substitute arrangements are in place to oversee the very limited existing demand, and those involved are appropriately trained to comply with requirements. This required temporary change provides an opportunity to review and improve the work moving towards business reinstatement.
- 2.5 Following the publication of our HMIP report in February 2019, the YJS at both strategic and operational level has worked hard to improve Out of Court Disposals (O OCD) delivery. The improvements and stability achieved have been well tested since lockdown. The throughput of O OCD during the pandemic has reflected previous performance with an increasing emphasis on the higher end Youth Conditional Cautions. The multiagency approach to O OCD decision making has been maintained during the pandemic and assessments and interventions offered to all young people. This has been a key area of demand during the pandemic.
- 2.6 During the time of the pandemic, Warwickshire YJS has had no serving prisoners in the Secure Estate. However, our Secure Remanded population, whilst comparatively small, has represented some very challenging and serious offences and behaviour. YJS has worked hard to retain contact with young people in custody during lockdown and has strongly advocated locally with institutions but also through regional meetings with the National Prison and Probation Service to ensure best possible service and facilities for young people who have been very isolated during this time. The use of the Court Virtual Platform for hearings can be extremely challenging for young people and their parents when they are held in the Secure Estate. A nationally recognised impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the longer Secure Remand periods of detention for young people awaiting trial and sentence.

This has produced a fiscal pressure on the local partnership which has been escalated in the regional Youth Justice Board meetings.

- 2.7 A further key area in our Standards for Youth Justice framework is the impact on transitions on young people who offend. Local relationships with the National Probation Service are strong, and despite the national resourcing decisions to decrease their contribution, the local partnership is working hard to sustain meaningful delivery and contribution. Within our wider partnership Transitions, including those within the Health Services, Education and Children's Services, the local partnership recognises we have a continuous improvement agenda, and most of the focus on this has been on an individual case by case basis during lockdown, but as Services work towards a more 'business as usual' type approach, the local partnership will need to invest energy and effort into improving bespoke transitions. A key area for continuous improvement will be the engagement of service users in Education, Training and Employment (ETE), and it is nationally recognised that lockdown has probably most severely impacted on our most vulnerable young people in respect of their education and training. The YJS continues to purchase bespoke Educational Psychologist time to facilitate services to those with SEND and those whose behaviour or offending impacts on their engagement with ETE.
- 2.8 During the lockdown period, there have been continued negotiations about the staffing and delivery from CAMHS and we are moving towards recruitment of a member of staff which will undoubtedly enhance delivery particularly in the OOCD and prevention levels of intervention. We are working to improve communication and align delivery with the local Liaison and Diversion Scheme to ensure seamless services for young people. Our substance misuse partner services provided by 'COMPASS', funded by the local Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, have continued to offer services to those with specific drug offending but also to the wider underlying needs of

those young people for whom substance misuse is a feature of their behaviour and offending,

- 2.9 A key development area identified by our 'Standards for Youth Justice' audit is the alignment with Early Help Services within Warwickshire County Council. Corporately, YJS is located and managed within the Children and Families directorate which significantly supports these developments. The Operational Manager for Targeted Youth Support regularly attends and contributes to the OOC Panel, and the local Pathway to Change assessment and intervention approach has incorporated the risk and vulnerability of the propensity to offend. Through the summer of 2020, the YJS has supported the Targeted Youth Support prevention programme, through referral and the sharing of resources.

3. Staff Care

- 3.1 Throughout the pandemic the safety and welfare of staff has been paramount. The previous issue of modern equipment and software facilitated immediate and sustained remote working. Within WCC there was prompt issue of PPE for those who needed to retain personal contact with service users. Staff supervisions and 1-1 sessions have been sustained, as have regular virtual team meetings and weekly check-ins for staff. All of these events provide the opportunity for colleague sharing and support, alongside information dissemination and practice guidance. This type of contact has been based on our Restorative Practice/Justice principles and has been a key feature of maintaining contact and caring for staff. At Corporate level within WCC there have been regular email and virtual briefings to keep staff up to date with guidance and safe practices.
- 3.2 Partner organisations have sought proper reassurance about care and arrangements for their staff which have been promptly attended to with satisfactory outcomes.

- 3.3 Within the YJS there have a number of staff who have needed to shield or take extra precautions to ensure the safety of themselves and their families. A flexible approach has been offered to staff whenever necessary. A range of services has been available to staff to assist them cope with the operational challenges of COVID-19 including, Occupational health support, the provision of office standard equipment in the home environment where required and increased mobile technology. It is greatly to the credit of staff that YJS has sustained the more challenging services such as providing Appropriate Adult Services in the cell block and also maintaining contact with high risk service users including at weekends.
- 3.4 The provision of some in house reparation services e.g Art and music workshops, woodworking and life skills were temporarily suspended during lockdown and a key part of business reinstatement will be the reintroduction of practical reparation provision to support existing online and virtual approaches.

4. Service User Voice

- 4.1 A key component of systematically obtaining service user voice has been through a Software programme and this has not been realistically viable during lockdown where face to face contact with offenders (which facilitates completion) has been limited. Young people continue to express their views through the use of ASSET plus and risk reviews, and a key reinstatement priority will be to re-introduce the systematic use of feedback from young people and parents.
- 4.2 The Chief Officer Board routinely receives feedback in relation to service user voice via the quarterly performance report, and the reinstatement of this facility will be a key component moving forward. As part of the importance of the Service User voice, our work moving forward inspired by BLM will of course seek to take account of the experience of our BAME young people.

- 4.3 Warwickshire YJS was an early adopter of the Trauma informed approach to Youth Justice practice. This has been sustained through lockdown and is a key feature in Risk Safety and Well Being meetings. The service recognises that the whole COVID-19 experience, with such potential for negative impact on families is a further important feature in our understanding of the Child's journey and trauma informed practice.

B. WARWICKSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE RESOURCING

- 1.1 All statutory partners mandated by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 continue to actively contribute resources and energy into the Warwickshire Youth Justice partnership. Partners seconding staff or contributing resources to the partnership all responded to the finance submission that was part of the Youth Justice Board return on 31st July 2020. This table is replicated as appendix A of this document. At a national level a decision was made to change the funding formula for Probation contributions for YJS and this has resulted in a reduction in contribution for Warwickshire, and this is reflected in appendix A. However, the change in that resourcing was locally and responsibly negotiated with YJS to best fit in the circumstances for both organisations. The only other small but noted budget reduction was the natural cessation of a European Social Fund grant that was designed to support the engagement of our service users in post 16 year ETE.
- 1.2 The budget for YJS has been approved locally and at the end of quarter one was on target. The identified financial pressure for the YJS is the overspend on Secure Remand accommodation which is undoubtedly impacted by COVID-19.

C. BUSINESS RECOVERY PRIORITIES

1. Staffing and Resources

- 1.1 In accordance with Corporate Requirements, business reinstatement risk assessments are being undertaken on each member of staff which recognise individual needs and risks. This is all with a view to business reinstatement that will potentially involve a greater level of presence in office buildings within COVID secure parameters. Buildings assessments have been undertaken on office and resource centre venues which address a range of issues including increased cleaning and hygiene schedules, social distancing and 'Track and Trace' regimes. A copy of the overarching and corporately approved Children and Families business recovery risk assessment can be found at appendix B of this document.
- 1.2 Work is being undertaken with staff to continue to learn, review and develop the best approach to a 'Restore, Reinvent and Retain' (YJB 2020) approach. This is an ongoing and dynamic process which is subject to constant revision in accordance with best practice and Government and local Public Health guidance.

2. Governance

- 2.1 The work of the COB will continue and as a new cycle of audit and quality assurance is introduced in Autumn 2020, the involvement of Strategic Board members will continue to be actively encouraged. Practice spotlights in COB will continue to bring alive operational delivery and challenges.
- 2.2 YJS COB will continue to monitor performance and resourcing at the quarterly meetings
- 2.3 YJS will continue to be represented and actively participate in a variety of partnership fora, all of which are seeking business recovery as appropriate

3. Operational Priorities for Business Reinstatement

- 3.1 Completion and ongoing dynamic risk assessment for individual staff, premises and activities.
- 3.2 Continued staff care and flexibility balanced with operational need and priority.
- 3.3 Continued adherence to COVID-19 secure working practices and provision of safe premises and PPE.

4. Court cells

- 4.1 Continued provision of COVID-19 secure Appropriate Adult services and PACE transfers where possible.

5. Out of Court Disposals

- 5.1 Continuation and development of multiagency approach to O OCD
- 5.2 Continued provision of escalations up or out of Court
- 5.3 Work with Police re levels of RUI

6. Court work

- 6.1 Continue to engage with local Court re priority listings
- 6.2 Continue to support the CVP process
- 6.3 Continue to advocate for the increase in personal, local court appearances for young people supported by their parents and carers
- 6.4 Continue to obtain sentence feedback in relation to our services as per Standards for Youth Justice audit

7. Referral Orders and YRO Orders

- 7.1 Embark on a Panel training refresh and recruitment of a more representative volunteer workforce
- 7.2 At earliest safe opportunity look to reinstate face to face panel work
- 7.3 Revisit the utilisation of COVID-19 safe community venues
- 7.4 Increase the face to face contact with young people in accordance with COVID-19 secure guidance , whilst ensuring that relevant virtual resources and interventions are proportionately utilised
- 7.5 Revisit local case and risk management guidance to ensure it reflects the approach of Restore, Retain and Reinvention
- 7.6 Reinststate QA and audit cycles on routine basis via refreshed performance meeting

8. Custody

- 8.1 Work to ensure best risk and need management practice in accordance with COVID-19 Secure practice.
- 8.2 Continue to offer and continuously improve robust packages to the Courts as alternatives to Secure Remand and Sentencing.

9. Transitions

- 9.1 Refresh work with key partners in education, social care and health to improve communication and the experience of the range of transitions in the child's journey

9.2 Adapt YJS audit tools to ensure transitions are actively audited and reported on

APPENDIX A

B5: YOT budget
Costs and Contributions

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board	352,707		139,997	492,704
Local Authority	1,129,671		456,824	1,586,495
Police	108,372		66,480	174,852
Police and Crime Commissioner	74,494			74,494
Probation	40,784		5,000	45,784
Health				0
* Welsh Government				0
Other - (RISE/CAMHS)	103,000			103,000
Total	1,809,028	0	668,301	2,477,329

APPENDIX B

[WCC COVID19 - Children and Families Risk Assessment](#)