

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	2 March 2022
LOCATION:	Remotely via video conference
TITLE:	Ceredigion Youth Justice Service
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	For information

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) sits in Porth Cynnal under the Substance Misuse Services. As part of the Through Age and Wellbeing programme and following consultation with our statutory partners on the Youth Management Board it was agreed to split the previous service in terms of prevention (Youth Work) and statutory work (Youth Justice). This is aligned with the Council's policy and approach of developing prevention services and having targeted specialist provision.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a requirement that local authorities must establish a Youth Offending Team (YOT) comprised of members of the police, social services, probation, health and education. YOTs, to:

- Assist police with out-of-court disposals and arrange for appropriate adults to be present during police questioning;
- Provide reports and information required by the courts in criminal proceedings against children and young people; and
- Supervise children and young people serving a community sentence and/or released from custody.

Work of Team

Court Orders/ Police Cautions- any young person that is convicted of a crime will automatically be referred to the service and part of their order will comply them to engage with the service, failure to do so will result in returning to court. This includes Young People that receive a custodial sentence that the service will work with. We are very fortunate that the numbers of young people are very low often under 10 per year.

Restorative Justice Action – or better known as Out of Court order is where a young person could be charged but the Police decide that it is better to follow a restorative approach often the young person would receive a Police Caution. The young person must admit the offence and they will attend a Bureau Chaired by YJS, with in attendance the police and a trained volunteer. This approach helps the young person recognise the impact of the crime and then the panel will decide a suitable community reparation. These can range from a letter of apology, repairing damage, financial payment to a number of hours volunteering. In an average year we hold

around 50 Bureau's and it is seen as a very effective way of addressing young people's behaviour.

Prevention – there are a number of young people identified by Safeguarding Services or Porth Cymorth Cynnar that are at high risk of offending so the service provides targeted support, this is on a voluntary basis with the emphasis on engaging young people who are often at risk from their own actions and could end up committing a crime due to their associations or behaviour.

Appropriate Adults- if a young person is arrested and does not have a suitable adult to support them while in Police custody and during a Police interview the service provides this service.

Victim Support- as part of the restorative approach adopted by the service we support victims of the crimes linked to the YJS. This is important for the victim but also for the young person because we can ensure the young person understands the impact of their actions and recognising that it can have longer lasting impact than they might have considered.

Trends/ Concerns.

Pandemic- there was a significant drop in the number of crimes recorded, young people were extremely good in terms of following the guidelines, not going out and in general compliance. There is evidence of the impact of not attending school and not socialising with increased levels of anxiety, stress and generally being unsettled. There is a slight backlash to strictly following rules, not in my opinion helped by a view that some politicians ignored those same rules and we are seeing disruption in school and minor anti-social behaviour.

Substance Misuse- this remains a concern and although with a minority of young people in Ceredigion it is an area of concern that we are targeting with education and targeted interventions.

Sharing of intimate images –the non-consensual sharing and distribution of images is an offence and a number of young people have committed this offence, often unknowingly and as such we have been providing education but also direct pieces of work as the consequences for the victim and offender can have a significant impact on their lives.

Knife crime- Nationally this has media exposure and an area of concern, in Ceredigion there has been 2 serious crimes committed and therefore we are working hard to ensure young people understand the risks and consequences of this crime.

RECOMMENDATION :

For Information.

Contact Name: John Callow

Designation: Corporate Manager Porth Cynnal

Date of Report: 16/2/22

