

Youth Reoffending Investigation Evidence

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Youth re-offending and resettlement in London – Hillingdon response

Please find comments below with respect to the stakeholder feedback on the above.

Nature and extent of youth re-offending

- Our local data shows us that we have seen a progressive reduction in the number of young people in the criminal justice system. A much smaller cohort remains with high levels of complex needs.
- Our data shows that as the complexity/level of need increases the likelihood of re-offending also increases.
- Hillingdon's re-offending is lower than the London and national averages
- Young people receiving a community intervention or no intervention are most likely to re-offend, those receiving pre-court or first tier interventions less likely.
- Our peak re-offending age is 14, however the 17 year old group as a whole commit the most actual offences
- re-offending rate by young women is lower than the national average rate and lower than for our young men.
- the white ethnicity group commit the most offences but the mixed ethnicity group shows the highest rate of re-offending
- Children who are or have been LAC have a higher re-offending rate than those who have never been LAC
- Most likely offence groups - theft and handling, robbery, violence against the person and drugs.

Our approach to tackling offending has changed in that we are better at using data to identify what programmes we need to develop, we have a greater range of programmes and our programmes are now evaluated for their effectiveness. However at the same time we have seen a reduction in services provided by all agencies making it harder to access provision to meet their individual needs in particular health and education needs, which works against our own improving practice.

Supporting young people

- Feedback from young people after all group work programmes
- at the end of interventions - using the HMIP questionnaire
- verbal feedback

We have a designated Integrated planning Co-coordinator who develops the group work programmes. Part of his role is to engage with local providers to deliver aspects of those programmes - preferably at no or minimal cost as funding is so limited

Heron Unit

- No significant impact on our work. Only one young person placed there.

Resettlement Brokers

- Don't feel they have met expectations - not as effective as we would have liked.
- Some duplication in role with the case manager in the YOS. Using our own education officer and connexions PA to support young people has been more effective.

Challenges and Opportunities

- As noted above working with a smaller cohort of young people with very complex needs, often children who have been damaged by their life experiences
- Reduced resources available to all partners
- Academy schools - minimal accountability to anyone it appears - makes it very difficult to maintain young people in mainstream placements
- The smaller numbers mean greater quality time with the most needy young people, unless of course base line budgets are cut.

Partnership Challenges

- Changing priorities of partner agencies
- financial constraints

MOPAC

- Contact mainly through gangs agenda
- We have no real opinion about MOPACs effectiveness
- Would recommend MOPAC and YJB have a closer association as there is some overlap and some programmes are being replicated through the two organisations - eg gangs work.
- The London YJB forum is quite strong and would suggest MOPAC send a rep to the Heads of Service meeting.
- Would also recommend MOPAC identifies lead officers to work with specific YOTs as the YJB does. This significantly improves communication.

Written submission from St Giles Trust

What is your data telling you about the changing nature of youth reoffending in London and more widely?

There is a growing issue in outer London boroughs and in towns outside London- some probably caused by movement of populations due to overall housing cost issues, some by deliberate gang member relocations and some by the economic situation in these new areas becoming as dire as it is in the traditional gang areas.

How has the approach to tackling youth reoffending in London changed over the past five years?

We have seen the development of a more standardised approach as a result of EGYV. St Giles Trust's SOS project works in over 14 boroughs and we see more consistency than we used to. It is our impression that the Police officers working in gangs units have generally chosen this area of work out of genuine interest, this makes the units more effective.

Does London compare favourably with areas of good practice in its approach to youth reoffending and resettlement?

St Giles Trust's SOS project has provided training, support and advice in a number of areas outside London and we have found that London is substantially ahead. Of particular note is the quality of multi agency relationships in London that include the VCS. In many towns the VCS is represented by smaller organisations that lack the experience and infrastructure necessary to engage successfully with the statutory sector, and particularly with the Police.

What are young people's experiences of interventions aimed at reducing reoffending and enabling resettlement?

Provision is still patchy, so I would think their experience is variable. There are also some occasions where partnerships break down and young people can be negatively affected by this- an example being when the Police decide to no longer 'play the long game' in terms of supporting gang exit but choose instead to go for 'quick wins', arresting gang members for possession of drugs- achieving a short term benefit for the community but causing distrust between gang members and VCS and leading in the end to poorer community safety outcomes. I am pleased to say that this does not happen often, but when it does there are a range of negative impacts on the overall gangs strategy.

What challenges exist in further reducing youth reoffending?

The lack of affordable and appropriate housing across London is a growing barrier to supporting young people to exit gangs.

What opportunities exist to further reduce youth reoffending?

Expand work with hospitals and health. Major Trauma Centres are getting attention but there are still a lot of potential clients who present at local hospitals with less serious injuries, and young women who are gang involved are unlikely to attend MTCs and are more likely to be found in STD clinics, Havens, birth control clinics and local hospitals.

Embed specialist gangs/ youth offending workers in family support teams to better engage with young offenders in the family. Make family support available to families of gang

nominals, to indirectly support the individual gang member and to deliver early intervention to siblings and other contacts.

Project Daedalus and the other LDA Youth Offending Projects

The papers refer to the success of Daedalus and the Heron unit, our experience was that these projects were very unsuccessful, and we were involved in the delivery of three of them. The key flaw was a 100% payment by results model that paid out mainly on education, training and employment outcomes, which are very hard to get for this client group. This requirement was due to the ESF funding used and was unavoidable, but the learning was that when working with such a chaotic client group these are not the best outcomes to pursue.

Other comments

Over the last five years we have seen a greater acceptance of the use of ex-offender staff by statutory agencies. The Police have been particularly willing to recognise the benefits of employing ex-offenders as part of a multi agency gangs team; we put this increased acceptance down to more mature discussions of risk between partners, and a recognition by statutory agencies that risk assessment of ex-offender staff isn't just about precons, it's about the quality of training, management and support they get from their host organisation.

**London Assembly investigation on youth re-offending and resettlement in London
Beyond Youth Custody response, December 2014**

About Beyond Youth Custody

Beyond Youth Custody (BYC) is a five year England-wide learning and awareness programme funded by the Big Lottery as part of the Youth in Focus programme which aims to support vulnerable young people through changes in their lives. The programme is a partnership led by Nacro along with three research and evaluation partners: ARCS (UK), University of Salford and the University of Bedfordshire.

BYC aims to enhance the understanding of best practice in the resettlement of young people (up to 25) leaving custody, improve the effectiveness of services and reduce the reoffending of young people. BYC is represented on the Youth Justice Board's Resettlement Expert Advisory Group by Pippa Goodfellow, BYC Programme Manager and Professor Neal Hazel, University of Salford.

The starting point of the programme was to carry out a comprehensive review of research and practice evidence about effective resettlement for children and young people. The literature review identified emerging principles for effective resettlement practice and also highlighted gaps in the literature. In order to gain a greater understanding of the principles and to address the gaps, BYC produces regular updates of literature, policy and practice and also uses thematic work to build an evidence base in areas that have been identified for further exploration.

This response offers a national perspective based on what we know about best practice in resettlement of young people from primary and secondary research. Key principles for effective resettlement practice and challenges identified through our review of the literature are presented. The response moves on to highlight recommendations from several of our thematic research studies which have been informed by the views of stakeholders, practitioners and young people. The Big Lottery's Youth in Focus Programme funds 6 London based resettlement projects that have contributed to BYC research.

More information about the Youth in Focus Projects can be found at:
<http://www.beyondyouthcustody.net/projects/>

Principles for effective resettlement practice

Beyond Youth Custody has identified 5 key principles to inform effective resettlement practice (the below excerpt has been taken from Bateman et al 2013).

1. Ensuring a continuous service. The multiple disadvantages that young people in custody face rarely commence either at the point of sentence or release into the community, but will be long-standing and deep-seated. This implies that effective resettlement should commence at the earliest opportunity. Planning within secure establishments should be focused from the outset on what needs to change to reduce the risk of reoffending when the young person is released and should ensure that the transition to the community is as seamless as possible (Altschuler and Armstrong, 1994; Altschuler et al, 1999). Training plans should accordingly take a long-term view rather than simply emphasising what programmes will be undertaken within the institution and how behaviour might best be managed. Conversely, services provided post-custody should be consistent with, and represent a development of, interventions within the secure estate (Hazel, 2004). By the same token, a young person may continue to experience difficulty beyond the end of the sentence. Resettlement provision should accordingly include making arrangements for continued support in required areas of the young person's life once the statutory involvement of the youth justice system has come to an end (Hazel, 2004). Ensuring such coordinated provision is likely to require joint planning of the whole resettlement process between agencies with responsibility for service provision in custody and those delivering support in the community (Hazel and Liddle, 2012).

2. Preparing for release. The process of preparing young people for release should commence at the point of entry to the secure estate. Education, training and vocational programmes should be available immediately and tailored to the individual's previous experience and levels of attainment in order to improve the prospects of access to education, training and employment on release, and to equip the young person with the confidence they need to successfully engage with it.

A more creative use of release on temporary licence can help to ensure that the requisite arrangements are in place for the young person's return to the community while also allowing a graduated return to the family, and militating against the worst effects of disorientation and trauma (Hazel and Liddle, 2012).

3. Supporting transition. While it is frequently recognised that the transition to custody is both traumatic and can result in disruption in the delivery of services and key relationships, it is less often acknowledged that the transition back into the community can also be a difficult, disorientating experience for young people as they have to adjust to a less regimented and more pressured environment, re-establish relationships and reconstruct their previous lives (Youth Justice Board, 2006). Research has consistently found that reoffending, or breach, are both more likely in the critical period immediately after release (Hagell et al, 2000; Hazel et al, 2002; Hazel et al, 2010a). In this context, it is important that the young person is prepared for this difficult period while still in custody, with significant effort devoted to ensuring high levels of contact with families and other significant adults in the weeks leading up to release. Support for the young person should be in place and relationships with those responsible for resettlement services should be established prior to release, the young person should be given clear information about plans for their future, and arrangements for implementing those plans should come into force as soon as the young person returns to the community (Hazel, 2004).

4. Ensuring engagement. Reference has already been made to the importance of engaging young people in the resettlement process; they should be motivated to comply because they recognise that the intervention has clear benefits for them and because they perceive that those delivering the service have a genuine commitment to their well-being (McNeill, 2009). Effective engagement requires the development of relationships that support change (McNeill et al, 2005). This in turn necessitates highly skilled practitioners able to: demonstrate empathy; show respect; exhibit a commitment to social justice that recognises the social and material hardship the young person may have endured; promote individual responsibility for actions and behaviour; and involve the young person in planning for their future (Mason and Prior, 2008). In particular, it is important that engagement is not seen as a passive process focused on the activities of staff, but as a collaborative endeavour whose aim is to promote opportunities for young people to exercise their autonomy in achieving agreed outcomes that they have had an active role in developing (Hart and Thompson, 2009). In many instances, this may involve staff attempting to help young people to identify any discrepancy between their current behaviour and where they would like to be in the future, so that they articulate the need for change themselves (Batchelor and McNeill, 2005).

Effective resettlement is, then, a child-centred practice that approaches young people as children (or young adults) first rather than young offenders, albeit children or young adults who may have more than their share of difficulties (Batchelor and McNeill, 2005). From this perspective, practice is also likely to benefit from a clear commitment to a children's rights based approach (Gray, 2011). Indeed, it has been suggested that one possible key to successful work with young people in custody, and beyond, would entail according them similar rights to those enjoyed by care leavers (Hollingsworth, 2012).

5. Co-ordinating services and brokerage. Given the complex and multiple difficulties that resettlement has to address, partnership working is key to ensuring that young people have access to the services that they require while in detention and beyond it (Youth Justice Board, 2006; 2010a; Carney and Buttell, 2003; Hazel et al, 2010b). Resettlement providers will not, in isolation, be able to meet the range of needs exhibited by young people with whom they work, and will need to engage mainstream and specialist agencies able to facilitate access to accommodation, education, training and employment, mental health services and support with substance misuse problems (Local Government Association, 2011). The ability to co-ordinate a wrap-around package of support from

such providers also enhances the potential that young people will continue to receive the services they need when their statutory involvement with the youth justice system comes to an end. For this reason too, partnership arrangements should extend beyond service providers to include the engagement of the family, representatives of the community, and employers from the area in which the young person will reside.

The input of a wide range of agencies, in itself, is not necessarily sufficient: provision from different partners must also be properly co-ordinated – inside custodial facilities and in the community – and necessary information must be shared appropriately between them (Hazel et al, 2010b). Such co-ordination does not necessarily happen naturally and must be regarded as a priority by those responsible for resettlement; sustainable resources should be made available to ensure that engagement of key stakeholders is maintained over time (Hazel et al, 2010b). Joint planning of the whole resettlement process accordingly requires the involvement of senior managers, with agreed shared aims and the ability to commit resources, on both sides of the prison gate (Hazel and Liddle, 2012). Such planning should also build in better access for families and providers of community services to young people while they are still in the secure estate.

The literature suggests that a partnership co-ordination (or ‘brokerage’) model is effective. Each youth offending team (or local authority partnership in the case of the recent consortia initiatives) should allocate a manager whose role is to champion resettlement and act as the key contact for all partner agencies. Resettlement staff should focus on ensuring co-ordination of packages of care and maintaining relationships with the wide range of partners (Hazel et al, 2010b).

Challenges and considerations for improving the approach to resettlement and youth reoffending

BYC has identified several gaps in literature and practice which are listed below. Considering how these gaps might be addressed to further develop the evidence base for resettlement practice and policy is a key focus of the Beyond Youth Custody programme.

- *Considering aims of resettlement and measuring success.* Little critical focus has been given to considering what the aims of resettlement are and how success is measured. The focus tends to be on the short-term prevention of reoffending, with less emphasis on measuring the longer-term factors relating to young people’s development and well-being. Considering alternative ways of measuring longer-term resettlement successes could prove beneficial.
- *Transition to adulthood:* This is problematic for resettlement because it involves a change of legislative provision, responsible agencies and relevant stakeholders. The Transition to Adulthood Alliance <http://www.t2a.org.uk/> carries out extensive research into this area and promotes distinct approaches for young adults throughout the criminal justice process based on maturity
- *Sudden termination of resettlement support:* Ending resettlement support suddenly at the completion of the licence period may diminish its benefits. More work is needed to investigate how to manage an exit plan, or to resource and co-ordinate the opportunity for continued provision beyond statutory obligations.
- *Enhanced support without increased risk of breach:* One of the challenges for resettlement practice is the prevalence of breach of licence conditions, leading to significant numbers of children being recalled to custody as a consequence of their non-engagement with provision designed to assist with their reintegration into the community. Given the extensive range of support needs, there is a tension between providing the enhanced range of services required and the implications of non-compliance leading to an increased risk of breach.
- *Diversity issues:* Diversity issues and their relationship with needs have not been fully explored in relation to young people. Until recently, very little was known about the resettlement of girls and young women and how services might be best delivered to take gender into account. BYC recent research in this area is included below. Black and minority young people are over represented among the custodial population, and have higher rates of

recidivism. Beyond Youth Custody will be looking into the resettlement needs of black and minority young people in the New Year.

- *Inclusion of the remand population in resettlement provision:* This population is neglected when it comes to resettlement provision, despite having apparently similar needs.

Thematic approaches to resettlement

In order to increase the evidence base and plug the gaps in what is known, BYC has carried out research into the following thematic areas: effectively engaging young people in resettlement, trauma informed resettlement practice, gender-sensitive approach for the resettlement of girls and young women and the way that young people experience the transition from custody back into the community. Considerations and principles for resettlement based on these themes of research can be applied to improve resettlement practice for young people.

Engaging young people in resettlement (Bateman and Hazel 2013). The chaotic social circumstances and previous negative experiences of many young people leaving custody constitute barriers to engaging them in resettlement services. Principles of effective practice should therefore include:

- Reaching out to young people in environments where they feel comfortable and providing activities, interventions and support that are flexible and are delivered in response to service users' articulated interests and needs
- Expectations must be realistic and progress, however small, acknowledged, reaffirmed and rewarded.
- Encouraging user participation and involving young people as agents in their own resettlement are both of central importance.
- Positive relationships between young people and staff, based on mutual respect are key to successful engagement.

Trauma-informed resettlement (Wright and Liddle 2014). Young offenders have a disproportionate amount of trauma in their backgrounds and display problematic behaviour that is linked to their experiences of trauma. Considerations for trauma-informed resettlement practice include:

- Staff training and support: key staff should be equipped with knowledge about trauma and its effects and supported in their work with potentially traumatised young people
- Client assessment and monitoring: young offenders' mental health needs should be systematically screened for, and responded to, with timely provision of appropriate specialist support.
- Programme content & delivery: Programme content should be informed by an understanding of an individual participant's trauma issues to avoid inadvertently reinforcing problematic behaviour.
- Coordinated partnership delivery: an integrated approach to providing services should be adopted by all the agencies involved, including the CJS, social services and mental health services.

Resettlement of girls and young women (Wright and Factor 2014). A gender-sensitive approach to resettlement is needed because young women have different pathways into offending than young men, women's ability to maintain positive relationships is damaged by custody, vulnerabilities and mental health issues make prison life particularly arduous and the barriers to desistance from offending are different for young women. Based on the specific needs and vulnerabilities of girls and young women, practice with this group needs to be shaped by three related gender-sensitive dimensions:

- Vulnerabilities resulting from experiences of trauma and abuse should be addressed.
- Relationships are a critical focus, including abuse in past relationships, developing trust with professionals now, and promoting positive future relationships.
- Empowerment to make positive choices will counterbalance vulnerabilities and experiences of subordination.

*Transition period: young people leaving custody and re-entering the community*¹. The period of transition from custody to the community provides a window of opportunity when young people are enthusiastic to change however this is impeded by a lack of sufficient, relevant and timely support, leading to disillusionment and a return to offending. In particular, plans for suitable accommodation and education, training or employment are often not established by the time of release.

- The period in the early days to weeks following release can be an overwhelmingly stressful experience. Young people report a period of disorientation and reorientation immediately following release relating to adjusting to changes to life regime, getting used to new environments and renegotiating relationships.
- This raises questions about the appropriateness of intensive early licence requirements, and of breach proceedings for failure to comply with such requirements.

Conclusion

Consideration could be given to how the principles for effective resettlement practice identified above could be tailored to a London specific context. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our research and contribute further to the Committee's work in this area.

For more information or detail on the information above please contact Pippa Goodfellow, Programme Manager: beyondyouthcustody@nacro.org.uk or visit our website: <http://www.beyondyouthcustody.net/>.

All reports can be found under 'resources' at the BYC website: <http://www.beyondyouthcustody.net/resources/publications/>

¹ BYC will be publishing this research in February 2015.

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Young Peoples' views on Youth Re-offending and Resettlement in London

User Voice contribution to the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee's investigation into youth reoffending in London

December 2014

USER VOICE

User Voice is unique because its work is **led and delivered by ex-offenders**. It exists to reduce offending by working with the most marginalised people in and around the criminal justice system to ensure that practitioners and policy-makers hear their voices. User Voice is well placed to gain the trust of and access to people involved in crime or who have direct experience of the criminal justice system as offenders and prisoners. The aim is to deliver a powerful rehabilitation experience for offenders, better criminal justice services and institutions, and more effective policy.

SUMMARY

This response documents the feedback gathered during a series of service user led focus groups undertaken by User Voice. The aim of these was to engage young people with experience of youth crime and record their views on youth re-offending and resettlement in London.

User Voice believes that no one can provide better insight in to these issues than the young people themselves.

Between the 1st and the 5th December 2014 User Voice held 3 semi-structured focus groups with young people **elected by their peers as Youth Reps** from Southwark and Tower Hamlets Youth Offending Services (YOS). These focus groups involved a total of 12 young people, 11 male and 1 female. 6 individuals currently attend Southwark YOS whilst 6 are from Tower Hamlets YOS.

The following short report outlines the questions asked of participating young people, which were informed by the Police and Crime Committee's Call for Evidence. Following the questions are representative views which has been transcribed verbatim and clustered around themes.

YOUNG PEOPLES' VIEWS

Do you know what help is out there to reduce reoffending?

Examples of help to reduce reoffending:

- *"Nacro, they were in jail with me, they came to jail when you're in jail. They do some group work with you...then they came to see me when I come out of jail to see how I was settling."*
- *"Youth clubs do [help reduce reoffending] because they have places to put kids and talk to them. [It's] pretty much just youth clubs."*
- *"Ex-convicts [help] especially because they're the ones who have been through it and have experienced the downside that people don't generally see, that's why a lot of people get involved in crime because they don't see the risk. Someone that's actually been through it can come out and tell you it's not worth it, they know how you feel because they basically did you you did or what you're going to do so they can guide you to make the right choice. So criminals themselves are a very good source."*
- *"[I spoke with] a victim support officer; she basically talked me through stuff like learning the effects of crime or robbery on a victim. It's [about] awareness."*
- *"We were just watching videos [with the YOT]. We saw how small actions can affect other people. I do feel [that it was beneficial]."*
- *"[The Metropolitan Police] organise a football league. They take reoffenders into their football league and make them play football instead of leaving them on the streets. I wasn't confident at first because obviously it's the Metropolitan Police but as they were being supportive and giving away things and we gained confidentiality, it's like you build yourself relationships."*

There is no suitable help and nothing will help reduce reoffending:

- *"[Help is only accessible] by getting arrested."*
- *"Nothing, if you want to commit a crime you'll commit a crime. If you make up your mind...what you think anybody can talk you out of it? No."*
- *"No one can stop you from doing what you do; you're the only one that can stop you. So saying all of these people have helped to stop [it's not like that] you're just thinking in your head to stop now."*

- *"Not really [anything available], the people that are on benefits they aren't getting anywhere so they're out there shotting or they're shop lifting."*

Whilst there is help out there, it can be hard to find:

- *"Obviously there are tonnes of programmes out there for [support], but I'll be honest, I haven't heard of half of them. It's for people who go searching for it, if you look for it, you'll find it. It's about individuality, and who wants help and who doesn't."*

Have you taken part in any specific courses or work aimed at reducing reoffending or settling back into the community?

Taken part in courses which helped to reduce reoffending:

- *"At the YOT I did reparation work and I did a painting as the reparation. There were two mentors...I learnt a lot from them."*
- *"Tonnes of courses that I can't remember the name of...Pathways Plus which is a course set by the YOT for reparation..., a theatre company that work alongside the YOT."*
- *"The ones about the victims show me that I'm not just affecting me by what I do, I'm affecting other people, if I do something really dumb or dangerous I'm not just ruining my life I'm ruining my family's life, I'm affecting their life and the lives of the people who I've hurt."*
- *"Yeah. User Voice. Keeping me out of trouble. I attend every week. "*
- *"I had support from custody, actually. We was on several like, programmes where victim awareness was run, offending was run, weapons, gun crime. It was about realising and understanding the way life works."*

Taken part in courses but these did not help to reduce reoffending:

- *"Knife crime programme by YOT...no [it didn't help] it just entertained me."*
- *"Summer arts programme, it was a waste of my time."*
- *"Coming here [YOS] is a waste of my time."*

Work to reduce reoffending has directly stopped reoffending:

- *"The biggest thing I've learn is thinking before I do things, which is what stops me from reoffending. But as much as I've learnt, like the other day when I was out I thought 'oh, I want to do something again'. There wasn't much in my way stopping me to do it; I haven't learnt anything else,"*

nothing's big enough to tell me not to [reoffend]. The only thing that stopped me was actually thinking before doing it, and actually thinking of doing it...So I thought about and I thought it's not worth it because of all the things I've learnt. But if I didn't have that teaching there's so many things that I'd be doing now."

What support do you think would be useful to stop re-offending?

Mentoring, role models, financial support and activities that keep young people engaged:

- *"Mentors, it's the only way. So imagine if my little cousin says he wants to be a roadman, but he sees me going to jail, he looks up to me...he's going to stop the road thing."*
- *"I don't think a lot else can be done, because how the community is, there are a lot of things that need to be in it for like trust. I mean there's a lot of stuff that is not in the community that is not there. Who a kid looks up to is a big part of it as well. If you look up to a gangster or someone whose looking to do wrong that's what you're going to look to do."*
- *"Most people who reoffend come from low income families. The main reason why people offend is to get money so [there should be] support, more financial support."*
- *"Youth centres. It keeps young people off the streets."*
- *"They should give us free events to do, to keep us busy."*

There is no suitable help and nothing will help reduce reoffending:

- *"Things can be done for some people but other people nothing can be done. "*

Do you think that there is a focus on reducing reoffending from services?

There is a focus on reducing reoffending:

- *"You go to court, you did a crime, you're expecting to go to YOT or do community service or probation etc. – instead of that, they wanna help you to get into education, unpaid work, work experience, like, preparing for work."*
- *"Yes, because they wouldn't put up organisations for no reason would they."*

There is not a focus on reducing reoffending:

- *"No, they want you to re-offend."*
- *"They want to send you down."*
- *Services are too quick to breach: "They're always on phone, letter, court. You don't get a 'Hi [name] why weren't you in?'"*
- *"They don't want you to be in the community."*
- *"I think it's more focused on stopping them like punishing them... I think they're focusing more on punishment more than prevention."*

There is a focus but this has not helped:

- *"Yeah they are [focused on reducing reoffending] but they're doing it wrong."*

Do you feel support is there to help you or is it forced upon you?

Reducing reoffending work is forced upon service users:

- *"Forced upon you, especially when you're on ISS. When you're on ISS your life is the YOT."*
- *"[The fact it is forced on you] means you don't want to come."*
- *"You don't want to come here, it's not motivation."*
- *"[The fact it is forced on you] made me wanna go less. No one wants to be told what to do."*
- *"They think they know what's best for you."*
- *"You're just more annoyed, because you ain't got control."*
- *"You're just doing it because you have to; at the end of the day you just get annoyed because you had to go."*

For more information please contact:

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RECEIVED
15 DEC 2014

Joanne McCartney AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London, SE1 2AA

10 December 2014

MOPAC12122014-16760

Dear Joanne

Youth offending and resettlement

Thank you for your letter of 14 November 2014. Please find my response to your questions attached (Appendix A).

In your letter you requested specific data, some of which is held by the Ministry of Justice. I have included (Appendix B):

- youth proven reoffending data back to 2005
- reoffence data from October 2010 to September 2012

However, as the data prior to 2005 and the further breakdown you requested are unpublished, the MoJ have been unable to provide it within the timelines requested in line with their Code of Practice for Official Statistics. If you still require this information you may wish to contact them directly.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Greenhalgh
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

APPENDIX A

PCC Youth Reoffending and Resettlement

The Role of MOPAC in reducing youth reoffending

- **How do you ensure that you have an up to date picture of youth reoffending in London?**

MOPAC receives regular data from the Youth Justice Board on both our Police and Crime Plan target to reduce reoffending by young offenders leaving custody by 20% and also broader London data on reoffending rates.

As part of my commitment to make data more accessible and transparent to the public and practitioners within the CJ, I am in the process of publishing a series of dashboards (to date this has included the Crime and Criminal Justice Timeliness dashboards). In early 2015, I will be launching my youth reoffending dashboard. This will include proven reoffending data on the target, broken down by borough and to cover timespan of up to nine year to allow effective comparison. This is being produced together with the Youth Justice Board and MPS so that we have a single view of performance in London and will be the first time this London specific data is available to the public.

I hope I will be able to share this with you at your meeting in February.

- **What resources and funding do you have access to in order to achieve your objectives in respect of youth reoffending?**

The majority of direct funding for youth reoffending comes through the Youth Justice Grant administrated by the Youth Justice Board. This funding is based on a national formula that includes population and deprivation, which provides limitations on the flexibility in how funding can be allocated at London level to address current challenges on reoffending. This is something I am keen to address and to realign, to ensure that the needs and issues outlined in our London wide data can be better addressed.

In relation to the target to reduce reoffending of those leaving custody by 20%, a key investment from the Mayor is the GLA/ESF investment of up to £3.5 million from 2012 to 2015 to provide resettlement support for those young offender leaving custody.

In addition a significant proportion of the London Crime Prevention Fund, in excess of £5 million annually, is allocated to London Boroughs to support local services and solutions for young people, a large proportion of which is allocated to initiatives supporting young offenders leaving custody. A good example is the Tri-borough youth resettlement project which is a £600,000 investment over four years.

We know that the evidence shows that a disproportionate number of young offenders have also been victims of crime and that their needs are too often not adequately addressed to allow them to cope and recover and in time to prevent them from reoffending. MOPAC has secured £1 million for funding victim services to those young people who are at risk of reoffending or are already within the criminal justice system.

- **What information does MOPAC collect to determine progress against its target of reducing reoffending by young people leaving custody?**

Proven reoffending data as collected by the MoJ/ YJB. As set out above this will form a key part of the new dashboard that I will be launching shortly.

- **How does MOPAC performance monitor agencies within the criminal justice system to ensure they are making progress on youth reoffending?**

I have held two MOPAC Challenges (June 2013 and September 2014) that have identified key data in relation to performance on reducing youth offending in London and held key stakeholders to account. Information on both these events can be found at www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-crime/police-and-crime-plan/mopac-challenge.

The latest Challenge highlighted for the first time that the reoffending rate for those receiving a community penalty in London is higher than those leaving custody. This acted as a prompt for London's key agencies and stakeholders to consider how our strategic approach to tackling youth offending in London should progress.

The new dashboard will ensure that the youth reoffending can be quarterly monitored by the LCRB, its partners and also for the first time there will be a direct line of account to the public.

At an officer level there is now a Youth Reducing Reoffending Board that is chaired by Lin Finnegan, Chief Executive of the YJB, but jointly owned by the YJB and MOPAC, with key representation across the youth justice system and including boroughs. This Board oversees performance against youth reoffending in London.

The impact of Project Daedalus

- **What was the overall reoffending rate of all those who left the Heron Unit between 2009 and 2012?**

A reconviction study was undertaken only for part of the cohort as owing to the time lag in receiving data on reoffending, a full analysis would only have been completed at around now, two years after the project finished. Of a cohort of 70 young people released from the Heron unit between 1 October 2009 to 30 September 2010, 53% reoffended in the 12 months following their release. Within the final report a broad brush comparison was made with national level re-offending statistics, which was 70% at the time.

- **What learning was taken from Project Daedalus and how has this been applied to subsequent projects?**

The learning from Project Daedalus was set out in the evaluation report http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LYRRP%20%28Daedalus%29_Final%20Report_1.pdf and includes:

- strong interagency working arrangements
- consistent tailored resettlement support
- mainstreaming provision and ensuring continued provision
- more structured routine for young offenders in custody

- longer funding periods for both the programme and evaluation
- greater links with resettlement programmes both locally and nationally.

In developing the GLA /ESF resettlement programme MOPAC supported the new commissioning process led by the GLA by facilitating a number of workshops and events that built on the learning from Daedalus to ensure it was incorporated into the new programme. This has also been the case for the new NOMS/ ESF resettlement programme that will include under 18s (for the first time and will act as the successor of the GLA/ ESF programme). This will come into implementation from summer 2015, acting as the follow on from the current ESF provision.

Current and future programmes

- **What are the aims and terms of reference for the Re-settlement of Young offenders Projects carried out as part of the GLA's ESF Youth Programme?**

The Resettlement Support for Young Offenders Leaving Custody project seeks to support young Londoners aged between 14 and 17 years of age who have either been remanded or sentenced to custody in order to allow them to re-engage with education, employment or training (EET) on release. The project will track that engagement until it has been sustained for a minimum of 26 weeks. This programme is contract managed by the GLA.

- **What funding has been allocated to the Re-settlement of Young Offenders Projects carried out as part of the GLA's ESF Youth Programme?**

The maximum budget allocation between 2012 and 2015 is £3.5 million (of ESF funding) but this will only be paid out on the completion of the full set of outcomes as set in the original specification.

- **What assessment have you, or will you, be making of the Re-settlement of Young Offenders Projects carried out as part of the GLA's ESF Youth Programme?**

The GLA have commissioned an evaluation of the programme and this is likely to include a reconviction analysis. An interim report is available on request.

MOPAC are committed to learn from this evaluation from this to inform the development of a London resettlement offer which MOPAC and YJB have jointly committed to work on and have put in place a joint post to take forward this work (further information on this is set out below).

- **How will the introduction of resettlement consortia compliment initiatives already underway to tackle youth reoffending?**

Custody numbers for young offenders in London are at just over 300, which mean numbers coming out into the community are low even for those boroughs with the highest demand. Therefore, in order to provide meaningful resettlement provision and opportunities boroughs work closely together and be more strategically aligned to build scale. The resettlement consortia, were successfully piloted in Greater Manchester, and have now been introduced to 12 boroughs in London (two different schemes) through MoJs Transforming Youth Custody. The intention of the consortia is to enable boroughs to

jointly commission and utilise provision to improve the overall offer to young offenders. This should complement existing initiatives and also maximise their benefit by ensuring a wider pool of young people leaving custody can access services cross borough.

I am supportive of the resettlement consortia, and the importance to trial this approach in London but we need to mindful this covers only 12 boroughs and we need arrangements in place to support all 32.

To this end I am looking to develop a strategic resettlement model for London and together with the Youth Justice Board have jointly funding a Resettlement Manager for London. The manager will be developing a resettlement offer for the whole of London, considering existing provision, funding flows and the gaps that exist which result in the maintenance of the high reoffending rates for young people leaving custody. Over the next two years, this post will develop a bespoke service offer for London and seek to tackle reoffending rates in a sustainable way.

Support for young offenders in the community

- **What is the evidence telling you about the reasons for high reoffending rates of young offenders with some types of community disposals?**

MOPAC Challenge in September identified this as a key issue and this is now an area where we are doing further work with the aim to better understand the needs and changing nature of the offenders being managed in the community and what this means for the type of services required at a local/community level.

There is clearly work to be done here by the Youth Justice Board to understand the data further. The key challenge moving forward is for us to consider whether the services and the funding models in place, best support local services in meeting these needs and addressing the stubborn reoffending rate of those young people not in custody. MOPAC is taking this forward.

- **What further work are you hoping to undertake to understand the challenges around young offenders who receive a community disposal?**

Further work is planned to understand this as part of MOPAC as part of its joint work with the YJB.

- **How will the issue of youth reoffending be incorporated into MOPAC's Youth ambitions and future strategies?**

All the data we have has shown that the scale and complexity of driving youth offending in London differs from the rest of the country (this was reinforced within MOPAC Challenge). It is my belief that London needs to take a regional approach to planning and investment in services that tackle youth reoffending in London. MOPAC are working with YJB and London Partners to develop London Ambitions for Youth Justice and continued focus on youth reoffending across London.

APPENDIX B – London Youth Reoffending Data

1. Pan-London youth proven reoffending rates from 2002 to date.

Published dates back to 2005 only

Rolling 12 Months	Youth Reoffending rate London (%)
Dec-05	32.83
Mar-06	32.91
Jun-06	33.11
Sep-06	33.24
Dec-06	33.36
Mar-07	33.34
Jun-07	33.22
Sep-07	33.21
Dec-07	33.72
Mar-08	34.15
Jun-08	34.79
Sep-08	34.91
Dec-08	34.64
Mar-09	34.72
Jun-09	34.45
Sep-09	34.91
Dec-09	35.71
Mar-10	35.58
Jun-10	36.63
Sep-10	37.94
Dec-10	38.15
Mar-11	39.83
Jun-11	40.37
Sep-11	40.53
Dec-11	40.09
Mar-12	39.25
Jun-12	38.82

2. In the years to October 2011 and October 2012, information on the types of re-offences committed by young offenders compared with the original offence.

Oct 2010 to Sep 2011	First Re-offence															
Index Offence	Abandoning or Bail Offences	Burglary	Criminal or Malicious Damage	Drink Driving/Motoring	Drugs	Fraud and Forgery	Handling	Other	Public Order or Riot	Robbery	Serious	Theft	Theft from a vehicle and taking and driving away	Violence-non serious	(blank)	Grand Total
Abandoning or Bail Offences	3	3	4	4	15	1	2	3	5	6		7		7	21	81
Burglary	4	35	11	6	47	2	8	6	17	29	2	37	9	22	213	448
Criminal or Malicious Damage	7	19	35	5	45		6	11	27	27	3	46	13	66	351	661
Drink Driving/Motoring	2	5	7	9	28	2	6	8	6	8	1	9	6	12	135	244
Drugs	11	41	26	19	340	10	21	24	49	78	12	52	17	101	631	1,432
Fraud and Forgery	1	1	3	2	5	1			2	2		8	2	1	80	108
Handling	1	10	6	9	19	1	5	4	7	15	1	10	5	17	134	244
Other	2	6	3	1	32		5	32	6	11		21		19	171	309
Public Order or Riot	1	12	21	10	74	5	7	20	53	35	4	48	9	86	415	800
Robbery	11	30	17	11	123	6	13	19	37	117	11	73	4	105	497	1,074
Serious		4	4		6	1		1	3	5	2	6	2	9	158	201
Theft	6	45	31	11	106	12	20	18	40	68	5	250	22	107	789	1,530
Theft from a vehicle and taking and driving away	2	10	8	8	20	4	5	8	7	9		12	11	17	132	253
Violence-non serious	16	42	69	21	162	7	25	27	76	103	19	78	16	198	1,166	2,025
Grand Total	67	263	245	116	1,022	52	123	181	335	513	60	657	116	767	4,893	9,410

Oct 2011 to Sep 2012 (London)	First Re-offence															
Index Offence	Abandoning or Bail Offences	Burglary	Criminal or Malicious Damage	Drink Driving/Motoring	Drugs	Fraud and Forgery	Handling	Other	Public Order or Riot	Robbery	Serious	Theft	Theft from a vehicle & taking and driving away	Violence-non serious	(blank)	Grand Total
Abandoning or Bail Offences	2	3	2	1	16		1	2	4	3		9	1	8	33	85
Burglary	4	25	12	7	59	1	10	4	10	14	2	42	7	23	266	486
Criminal or Malicious Damage	1	17	33	5	28	1	2	5	18	18	2	32	5	52	265	484
Drink Driving/Motoring	2	6	4	9	22	2	2	1	2	6		8	4	9	100	177
Drugs	10	31	23	24	368	9	19	12	36	44	8	64	17	86	583	1334
Fraud and Forgery		1	1	1	3	4				2		7	1	6	76	102
Handling	2	6	6	3	29	1	5	7	4	9	1	20	2	21	131	247
Other	3	5	6	2	18		3	20	7	5		4	1	12	147	233
Public Order or Riot	3	7	10	11	38	3	4	7	27	34	3	30	7	38	297	519
Robbery	7	19	18	13	92	8	12	10	28	96	4	50	12	84	493	946
Serious		1	1	1	13		1	3	2	6	1	3		8	116	156
Theft	5	35	28	7	60	10	10	24	26	48	5	191	15	81	610	1155
Theft from a vehicle & taking and driving away	2	13	4	9	25	1	3	2	3	6	1	13	7	6	96	191
Violence-non serious	7	22	34	10	123	4	17	10	38	62	9	70	15	159	930	1510
Grand Total	48	191	182	103	684	44	89	107	205	353	36	543	94	593	4143	7625

- **How has the approach to tackling youth reoffending, in London and more widely, changed over the past five years?**
- **How does London approach to tackling youth reoffending compare with other projects Working Links is involved in elsewhere?**

This is our first programme delivering to this specialist cohort (14-17 young offenders), however, through other more mainstream programmes we have historical experience working with similar specialist groups within the programme deliverables:

Moving on programme (Current) is a NOMS/ESF funded programme to reduce reoffending by improving the employment prospects of offenders by addressing needs across the 7 pathways. Qualifying age group 16+. We also deliver specialist Projects including people involved in serious group activity (Gangs) and Resettlement Mentor service. The programme uses a Case Management delivery model with Case Managers based in all 8 London Adult Establishments including two YOI's, as well as a presence within London Probation service sites and some Youth Offending Services offices.

Private Sector Led Hackney New Deal – This was a Mandatory programme for unemployed 18-24 year olds living in Hackney. Group Inductions specific to client group held once a week and individual Action Plans completed to identify specific needs. As part of the induction all participants attend a 2 weeks motivational and employability programme called Fit 4 Work an innovation created by Working Links and designed specifically to meet the needs of this client group. Over 60% of participants completing the programme entered into paid employment.

East London Works – Target client group – Offenders, Lone Parents and Homeless. Partnership with Employment First, to engage with local community and provide employment support and Damiloo Taylor Trust centre to provide mentoring. Pooling of resources maintained strong community links needed to deliver contract successfully. 266 clients placed into work. 52% conversion rate

Komo Shadin - provided an opportunity for integration and acceptance into British culture for those further isolated from their own communities and British society by their criminal conviction, thus given the chance to be accepted by both communities. 270 clients engaged with onto program.

Brent Ex-offenders contract - Opportunity identified to work with ex-offenders previously accessing Action Team services. Working Links provided expert advice on preparing disclosures and employment support. Brent Council provided, funding via LDA, access to all borough council owned residents services to source referrals and access to other providers for free training. 617 starts on programme with 59% conversion rate into employment.

Main similarities and difference

Scale – volumes on some of the contracts above have been significantly larger in comparison allowing for additional resources and sub-contracting for provision and end to end delivery. The additional resource allows more freedom to be innovative, wider partnership bank of specialist provision and the ability to cater to the needs of the local caseload.

Payment By Results – Working Links has a long and successful track record of delivering PBR contracts. The youth justice resettlement programme's outputs are starts on programme, entry into ETE and 26/52 weeks sustained ETE. This structure drives us to focus our efforts into preparation and

continued support in order to achieve the main income driver – 26 weeks sustained ETE. However the payment structure does not recognise distance travelled in the form of ‘soft outcomes’ i.e. attitudinal and behavioural skills, motivation levels, and support with other socio-economic challenges of which the majority of our participants experience as a blocker to ETE requiring intensive support.

- **What challenges do resettlement brokers face in co-ordinating partners to provide support for young offenders?**

Overview of the project - SWITCH is a two-year voluntary contract. It is aimed at young people aged between 14-17 years old leaving custody with the main performance driver being sustained ETE (26 weeks). Other outputs include Starts on programme, entry into ETE and 52 weeks sustained ETE.

We deliver flexible, needs-led rehabilitation support that aims to stabilise the young person’s life whilst reducing the risk of re-offending. We will identify and in conjunction with YOS address any barriers across the re-offending pathways to enable sustained education, training or employment outcomes.

The engagement process – We have case managers based in four secure estates (Feltham, Cookham Wood, Oakhill and Medway). Our case managers have access to prison IT systems in the YOI’s and rely on generated referral lists from Secure Training Centres (STC’s). These referral sources are then used to conduct further eligibility checks. An extensive service promotion campaign has been delivered targeting key stakeholders using targeted marketing material as well as presentations to operational teams. Other referral sources include Secure Estate case worker, peer referral, community YOS case manager, St. Bernados, and Social Workers.

Initial Assessment – this is a standardise questionnaire completed with the participant at the engagement stage and is focused on the reducing re-offending pathways the result of which is used to formulate a bespoke action plan.

Intervention – this is one to one and is driven by the Bespoke Action Plan. Activities typically include career guidance, CV and disclosure work, preparation for ETE, offending behaviour sessions, application to ETE opportunities, as well as pastoral care i.e. attending family days, through the gate escort, motivation, and confidence building, advocacy. We use a reward system to encourage engagement and progression using a bronze, silver and gold platform with a choice awards at each stage. We also actively encourage our participants to make the best use of their time in secure estates by engaging with the secure estate behaviour reward system.

Provision of ETE – we have sourced varied and flexible ETE opportunities across London moving away from traditional academic routes in response to the caseload needs and to ensure timely entry into ETE (most of our participants are released outside of the traditional college entry windows January and September). We have a Partnerships coordinator responsible for sourcing suitable provision, undertaking verification and external risk assessments, as well as having in place referral and feedback processes with providers.

Customer feedback – We seek the views of our participants through a variety of ways including feedback questionnaires at key milestone stages, as part of the mentor observation process, informal feedback and listening groups sessions. The feedback has so far been positive and wherever

possible we use their feedback to develop the service i.e. our participants played an active part in creating the reward and recognition system we have in place.

Work Programme and Troubled Families – due to the age group we have virtually no interaction with Work Programme as the majority of our participants are 16-17 year old age group. Our contact with 'Troubled Families' is minimal affecting a small number of the caseload of which we are made aware post release when invited to attend TAC meetings.

Challenges

Young People in custody with no fixed address – This is a statutory service provided by the Local Authority. In most cases, this is resolved at the eleventh hour before release. This then presents challenges with sourcing suitable ETE opportunities in the community – 35% of the caseload.

Short licencing duration post release – a cohort of young people are released with very short licences to serve in the community some as short as 1 day. This can lead to issues with engagement with the community mentor as they often will disappear only to re-appear in the secure estates where we re-engage.

14-15 year olds return to statutory education – statutory responsibility rests with the local authority and should be in place before the young person is released. Our experience is mixed – on occasions the placement is not secured before release particularly if a young person does not have an address (but this is not always the case) and in extreme cases has taken several weeks to secure.

Limited participant choice – the standard destination for our young people is Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) with few exceptions to the rule returning to mainstream secondary or alternative year 9/10 education.

YOS engagement diverse protocols - In terms of engaging the YOS, there are two main routes either engagement with YOS before we engage the young person to establish suitability for the programme, or after we have engaged with the participant. This is dependent on YOS preference (the majority prefer the post engagement option). Where we have a local arrangement with the YOS to authorise engagement before we approach a young person in general the response rate is quick with few rejections.

The rationale for opting for this referral process is inconsistent across the patch – some, to manage the number of professionals, others to avoid duplication if there is in-house provision for ETE/mentoring, again the reasoning is inconsistent and as a result limits access to the provision based on postcode.

Staffing issues across YOS – We have experienced pockets of high turnover in local YOS teams which presents a challenge to maintaining the good relationships with the operational YOS teams and keeping the communication timely with the YOS case managers.

Intra-YOS transfers – we have a few case studies where a young person has been re-located and as a result transferred YOS. Our experience of the transfer process is mixed with some YOS case managers laying robust transition arrangements ensuring the young person's engagement with all

support services including Switch is maintained. Generally we have found the transfer process to be laborious and as a result the young person is quite often left in limbo waiting for the receiving YOS to accept their case. Furthermore, in isolated cases we have young people making multiple moves between YOS areas which is unsettling to the participant and risks continuity of service and support into ETE.

Group work in the secure estates – A large part of the work we do with young people is preparation for release and subsequent sustainment in ETE focusing on the pathways to reducing re-offending. The most effective way is small group delivery. Secure Estate resource, competing for time against mandatory education, and safe systems have presented obstacles to the point where we changed our delivery model very early on to one to one intervention.

Post 18 transition – The programme offers continued support to participant's post 18 (provided we have engaged before they reach their 18th birthday). Shortly before or after a young person is 18 they are transferred to probation services the majority serving a custodial sentence will be transferred to adult establishments. We are more often unintentionally excluded from the transition process which in turn halts engagement because we cannot locate the participant. At best we get a probation area and the receiving prison.

Supported Housing Accommodation – Some of our young people due to circumstances are housed in a supported accommodation placement or foster care; more often this is outside of London and the Home Counties. The quality of provision in London is very diverse and can be a post code lottery. We have experienced well established, quality providers with strong leadership and experienced support workers providing a structured and positive experience for our young people. However, this experience is not the norm, more often the residence are provided with little structured support, no enforcement of boundaries and low expectations.

- **What is your relationship with Youth Offending Teams across London?**

The community Resettlement Mentors have a designated cluster area of Youth Offending Services teams. The relationship is collaborative in nature and can be described as very good across London.

Stakeholder membership – We are members of local YOS led resettlement groups at varying levels. Resettlement Mentors are members of resettlement and TAC forums where in existence and management grade members of the North London Consortia and more recently South London consortia.

Communication – We start and continue the communication thread with both secure estate and community YOS team's right from the start of engagement. Mentors will provide a brief summary of each intervention as well as attending review meetings both in secure estates and in the community. We are treated as part of the professional's team around a young person and our input is valued amongst our YOS colleagues.

Aside from the above, we send a bi-monthly caseload update to the secure estates and community YOS on participants progress on the project.

Duplication – Due to the strong communication channels, in the majority of cases or intervention is included in sentence planning reports prepared pre-release. We work closely with all involved workers to ensure duplication is avoided adopting a collaborative approach. To give a few examples,

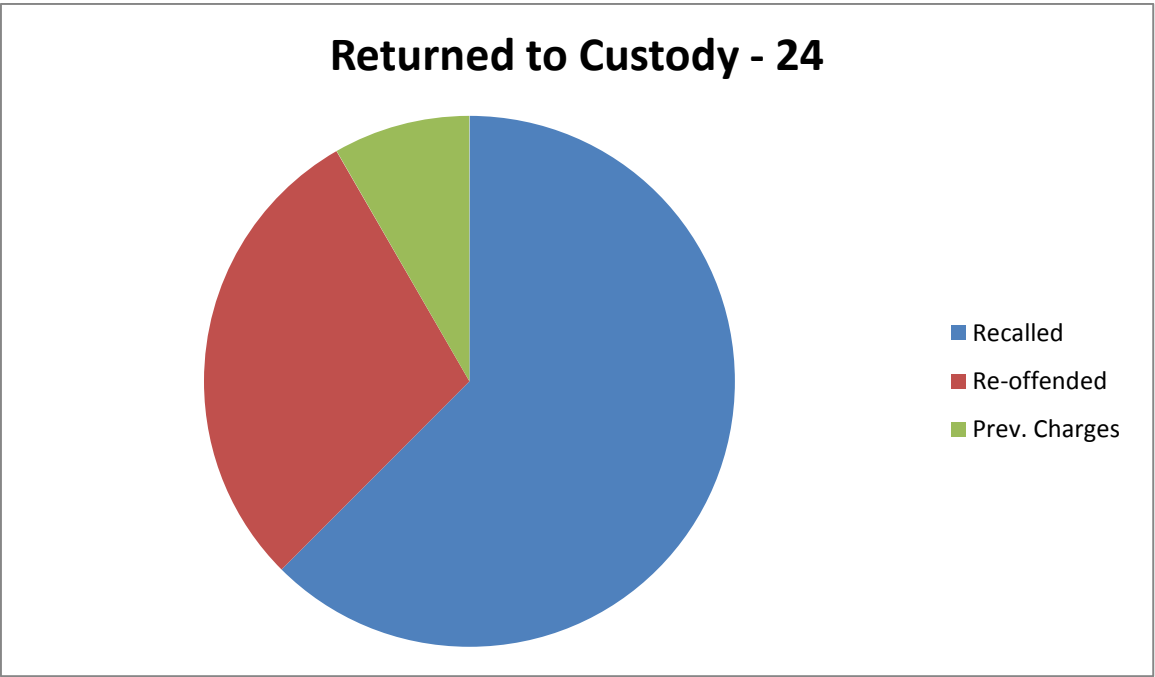
where a YOS do not have an in-house ETE service we will source the ETE opportunity. Where a YOS enjoys this service our focus is on preparation i.e. application and disclosure work, behavioural work, mentoring, assistance with travel, course material reward systems, sourcing a progression ETE opportunity etc. As a result of being involved in the planning process before and after release we are able to provide value added support where a gap is identified.

Local Service Level Agreements – the project has SLA’s in place with most of the Youth Offending Services across London. Where we do not have a formal SLA there still remains an informal agreement between the project and the local YOS teams.

Duplication -

- **What are the reoffending rates of the young people that you have worked with under the Re-settlement of young offender’s project?**

To date 141 young people engaged on the programme released into the community of which 25 have returned to custody 18%.



► **London Assembly Policing and Crime Committee Call for Evidence on Youth Reoffending and Resettlement**

► **London Councils Response**

London Councils represents London's 32 borough councils and the City of London. It is a cross-party organisation that works on behalf of all of its member authorities regardless of political persuasion.

Summary

London Councils welcomes the opportunity to respond to the London Assembly Policing and Crime Committee's Call for Evidence on youth re-offending and resettlement in London.

How is the nature of youth offending and reoffending changing in London?

London's Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) have been hugely successful in cutting the young people in custody. There has been a 60% reduction in the number of youth First Time Entrants (FTE) to the criminal justice system in the last 5 years. Nationally, in the last year, the number of FTEs has fallen by 25 per cent from 36,920 in 2011/12 to 27,854 in 2012/13. In November 2014 there were 293 young people from London in custody.

The success of reducing FTE and the number of young people in the youth justice has meant that the nature of the cohort of young people now in the youth justice system has changed. As the cohort has become smaller, the needs and behaviour of those within it have become more challenging. In this context addressing the reoffending rates of this more complex cohort is a significant challenge. London's YOTs are adapting to a new, more complex cohort by identifying and implementing new approaches to addressing offending, and to meet safeguarding needs.

What, if anything, are the challenges for London boroughs in respect of tackling youth reoffending?

Financial Climate

Roughly one third of funding for YOTs comes from the Youth Justice Board and, broadly, the other two thirds comes from local authorities and other partners. In 2014/15 London local government spent

£56.3million on Youth Justice¹ of which £15.1million was the YJB Youth Justice Good Practice Grant². The 2015/16 YJB Youth Justice Good Practice Grant has been subject to a 7.6% reduction. In terms of partnership funding local authority services contributed the most to YOT funding, providing more than three quarters (76%) of the total supplied by statutory agencies other than the YJB. The police, on average, provided ten per cent, probation seven per cent and health six per cent. However local government is operating in a very challenging financial climate – London Councils has modelled that there will be a total reduction in core funding for London local government between 2010/11 and 2018/19 of £3.7 billion or 60 per cent in real terms. It is inevitable that, under the current local government funding model, there will be reduced local budgets for working with young offenders.

Youth Justice Stocktake

In November 2014 the Ministry of Justice announced a ‘stocktake’ of Youth Offending Services. The stated aim of the ‘stocktake’ is to improve government’s understanding of how YOTs are operating including looking to examine why some YOTs have been more successful than others. There is a concern, however, that the stocktake might be a precursor to ‘privatising’ the work of YOTs. Our understanding is that the ‘stocktake’ is still on-going with a report not due until after the May election. London is seeking to be on the front foot ahead of any proposals arising from the Ministry of Justice’s ‘stocktake’ of youth offending services.

New Offender Management Arrangements

The Transforming Rehabilitation reforms and the new offender management arrangements have the potential to impact on London boroughs tackling youth reoffending. Local authorities remain concerned about whether these new nationally commissioned services will effectively deliver within existing and successful local partnerships. Probation officers within YOTs have remained in the National Probation Service. However work with young offenders has not been immune to the impact of the reforms. The split of the service has meant that there has been considerable pressure on National Probation Service resources. Crucially the reforms have implications for how YOTs interact with the adult arrangements with regards to young people who are at the point of transition. London Councils is working with MOPAC to and MTCnovo deliver a structured engagement plan to support MTCnovo build up their understanding of the London commissioning and delivery landscape.

Youth Custody

There are understandably grave concerns about recent HMIP reports which have highlighted high levels of gang issues; violence, bullying and isolation young people can experience whilst in custody. This can make resettlement more challenging once the young person is being managed in the

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365591/RA_2014-15_data_by_LA_-_Nat_Stats_Release_-_Revised_22-Oct-2014.xls

² The use of the YJB grant is currently restricted to “good practise and research” although recent YJB changes mean this might change

community. The fact that 60% of London's young offenders are placed outside of London does make resettlement planning more difficult for YOTs. In the past work in custody hasn't started early enough and there is an acknowledged need to build more build positive working relationships between custodial and YOT staff. We are however optimistic about the London Resettlement Consortia³ being developed to improve resettlement options for young people leaving custody.

Future of Youth Custody

The Government is introducing a new model of youth custody, the Secure College, with the state aim of improving outcomes and reducing cost. By taking a wider cohort of young people aged 12-17, the government's aim is to, in time, close Secure Training Collages and a number of places in Secure Children's Homes, as well as Youth Offending Institutions. We are concerned about the appropriateness of placing these age groups together, and in such large institutions. We are also concerned that having large institutions, potentially miles away will make it more difficult for local authorities to effectively plan for resettlement before release and for families to provide vital emotional support through regular visits.

How effective is MOPAC in working together with key agencies to tackle youth reoffending and what more do you think MOPAC and the Met could do to improve their approach to youth reoffending on a local and regional level in London?

The historic success of the youth justice system presents an opportunity to give an even greater focus to preventing young people entering the youth justice system. These efforts should be focused around aligning youth offending services with local Troubled Families programmes as well as strategic engagement with schools through pan-London schemes being developed by MOPAC in partnership with boroughs, for example the Crime Prevention Curriculum.

Where MOPAC can and does add value to the work delivered at a local level is their ability to develop programmes, which due to scale or cost cannot effectively be commissioned at a local level. Current examples of this include youth workers in Major Trauma Centres and a Pan-London Gang Exit scheme.

In the longer term, and given the fiscal challenges ahead, London Councils, with MOPAC, through the London Crime Reduction Board is beginning to explore potential devolution and reform options that might improve outcomes and deliver the required savings. However, for London local authorities, any reform should be based on the following key principles:

³ North East London: Waltham Forest, Enfield, Newham, Hackney, Redbridge and Islington, South London: Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Croydon, Greenwich and Wandsworth

- While local authorities remain the organisations with the statutory responsibility for work with young offenders in the community they must retain local control over resources to work with young offenders.
- Any reform or allocations based on demand should be on a reinvestment or earn back basis.
- Any reform should not introduce any unnecessary bureaucracy which takes away resources from front-line delivery.
- Any reform should not risk of disrupt crucial local partnerships as well as crucial work to bring together aligned responsibilities that exist and work best at a borough spatial level. This is an important principle as local areas look to lateral integration to drive improvements and efficiencies, organising disparate services around young people at risk (using a Troubled-Families type of approach).

There is case, as cohorts get smaller, for certain responsibilities within YOTs to be delivered through greater sub-regional working, however these arrangements should evolve organically and be borough-led. There is also an opportunity to explore how we use data about young people resulting from certain 'trigger' events so that we can offer targeted early help. (For example arrests of young people that result in no further action, young people who receive an out of court disposal or young people who repeatedly go missing). MOPAC and the Met will be essential to accessing and using this data.

What is the impact on local authorities of paying the costs of custody for young people?

The responsibility for the cost of youth on remand transferred to local authorities in April 2013.

At the time London boroughs welcomed the opportunity to focus on reducing custodial remands for children and young people on the basis that it would be an opportunity to drive down demand and then reinvest released resources in local services.

Allocations to local government to meet the cost in that first year were 26% less than when the costs were met by government, as well as removing London's £5.8 million subsidy for placing young people in secure children's homes.

Local authorities generally met this challenge in 2013-14. However this resulted in successful areas receiving less funding in 2014-15 as formula was then based on the new demand. This has meant that there has been no incentive created for local areas as no virtuous circle has been created. This has been a missed opportunity for up-stream investment.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Lib Peck
Executive Member for Crime and Community Protection
London Councils

What is your data telling you about the changing nature of youth reoffending in London?

We do not hold any specific data on this subject, but our perception is that the cohort in youth offending teams and custodial settings is much more entrenched in offending than in previous years. In custody, young people are serving more serious sentences for more serious crimes. Some of our work in the community, for example in Hammersmith and Fulham, has revealed that reoffending can be as high as 50% in spite of considerable investment in services.

Another thing to consider is the context; a possible side effect of cuts to universal service provision (e.g. youth clubs) and ever-present youth disaffection may have implications on mid and longer-term youth outcomes (e.g. being out of education or employment). With these trends in mind, youth offending may rise in London a few years from now (we know that the scale of youth unemployment is currently underestimated in the official statistics¹).

How has the approach to tackling youth reoffending in London changed over the past five years?

There has been an increased recognition of the specific needs of young people in the criminal justice system at all levels of government. Central government has sought to explore the role of education in reducing juvenile detention and has rightly sought to examine whether young adult offenders (18-21) can be detained in adult prisons.

European Social Fund finance has been purposefully and successfully been applied to youth justice system in London over the past five years and has led to greater understanding of the possibilities for successful resettlement and rehabilitation. The evaluation of the Mayor's Daedalus project, for example, has advanced our understanding and the literature of youth resettlement considerably. Arguably this has influenced the creation of the YJB resettlement consortia, which have been operational since November 2014. We can do more to use programmes and pilots such as this as the basis of how business as usual services can be run in the future.

What are young people's experiences of interventions aimed at reducing reoffending?

On the whole, experiences are mixed largely due to the provision itself being patchy. There is a preponderance of projects funded by different organisations that are never uniformly presented to young offenders' institutions or youth offending teams. Young people get 'sold' an idea of a project that then struggles to engage them in the long-term (for reasons such as funding constraints). Resultantly, there is also a sense of initiative fatigue – with many things being tried over too short a time frame, and being unable to reach a tipping point to achieve the desired change.

Young people talk positively about experiences in engaging on projects that involve sport or the arts. While we know these can be effective in recruitment, on their own they might not be enough to generate change. Among other things, they need to be aspirational and effective at developing cognitive abilities. Only Connect has successfully partnered with [Unitas](#) to deliver Summer Arts colleges to youth offending teams, with young people benefiting from skills acquisition and a likelihood of entering employment.

What challenges exist in further reducing youth reoffending?

While there has been a fall in young people detained in custodial institutions, there are many pressing challenges to resettlement services. There is still a recognition that not enough investment is going into the resettlement and rehabilitation of young people on a strategic level, with provision being varied in consistency and quality. Moreover, alternatives to custody need to be evolved further and trialled systematically in the same way that, for example, the [Centre for Court Innovation](#) experiments in New York City. A greater use of restorative approaches could be made.

The residual youth justice population displays more entrenched offending patterns (repeat and/or violent behavior) – both in custody and in youth offending services. The HM Chief Inspector of Prisons Annual Report recently noted that as the number of children in custody has fallen the *needs and requirements* of this population have increased.

¹ See Impetus-PEF, Out of Sight, report available [here](#)



Almost one in five of those in young offender institutions (YOIs) in 2013/14 considered themselves to have a disability and a third indicated that they had been in local authority care.

This is compounded by a fall in prison officer capacity across the juvenile and adult estate since 2010. The reduction in staffing means that inmates are more often kept behind locked cell doors and as a result there tend to be more violent incidents, self-harm and suicide inside prisons. This has been evidenced in Feltham and Cookham Wood YOIs in recent months, with slight improvements arising from the introduction of primary and secondary mental health services. It is a sad state of affairs when we decide that young adults (18+) will be safer in an adult prison than in a YOI because the YOIs are in such a volatile state.

More young people who are from London are being imprisoned in places outside of London. This presents considerable challenges for resettlement and rehabilitation, with young people not benefiting potential support from family members or rehabilitation organisations.

What opportunities exist to further reduce youth reoffending?

In the community: the review of Youth Offending Teams, announced by Andrew Selous in November is a considerable opportunity. Youth Offending Teams have been in operation for over a decade and now is a good time to be reviewing their performance and fitness for purpose in a changing socio economic context. Only Connect has put together a report on the future of Youth Offending Teams, arguing in favour of greater local integration, evaluation and impact monitoring, and public-private collaboration in the delivery of youth offending services.

In custody: to combat the chaotic nature of provision in custody and the shortage of prison officer staff, volunteers from the community need to be mobilised and allowed into the custodial estate. The potential impact of volunteers, such as mentors, is not fully understood or utilised by secure establishments who (rightly or wrongly) focus their attention on the conditions inside. In 2015, Only Connect will be scaling up its [Entourage](#) programme that recruits community volunteers (mainly professionals) to support young people aged 16+ through professional 'group' mentoring. We feel that more can be done to reduce the barriers to volunteers engaging with serving prisoners.

What more do you think the Met and MOPAC could do to improve their approach to youth reoffending on a local and regional level in London?

The Mayor should be encouraged to preserve funding to GLA youth provision and look at ways of improving efficiency and effectiveness – as well as attracting finance from different sources (e.g. philanthropy). The Mayoralty has unique power for preserving a focus on young people in London as local authorities begin a second wave of budget reductions.

There is a strong case for devolving greater control and coordination of justice budgets to the Mayor/MOPAC. Courts, YOIs and youth offending teams still operate outside of the Mayor's sphere of influence. If the Mayor/DMPC is to be accountable for reductions in crime (including a 20% reduction in youth reoffending), they require greater control of the criminal justice system apparatus in London, not limited to the police force. We hope that a serious discussion can be held on this subject in 2015 involving London authorities, the Ministry of Justice and other stakeholders.

K: 30 JAN 2015



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Our Ref 2015010001419

22 January 2015

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Dear Joanne.

Thank you for your letter dated 14 November 2015, received in my office by email on 14 November, regarding youth re-offending and resettlement.

This is an interesting and relevant piece of work for all stakeholders to be involved in.

Please find attached to this letter the Metropolitan Police response to the specific questions raised by the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee.

*Yours sincerely
Bernard*

**Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe
Commissioner**

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1. Purpose of Report

This report has been written in response to a call for evidence from the Chair of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee. The request seeks information in response to 6 specific questions, and more generally, seeks any further relevant views regarding the approach to Youth Offending in London.

2. Questions requiring response.

A) What if anything is changing about the nature of youth re-offending in London.

Based on the latest confirmed data available (RY to Sep. 2012), although London has the largest number of young offenders leaving custody of any of the regions in England and Wales, their proven re-offending rate is one of the lowest in the country (54.5%) and is continuing to fall against a national picture of increase.

The changes that were effected by the enactment of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act in April 2013, intended to reduce the numbers of young people in custody, means that a smaller custody cohort now will proportionally contain young people with more complex needs who have committed some of the most serious violent or sexual offences. Many young offenders who previously would have received a custodial sentence now receive community sentences, increasing demand on the YOS agencies who manage the risk presented by these offenders.

Given the time lag for collecting the proven re-offending data, it is too early to know what the effect of these changes will be, although it is of concern that prior to these changes, the rate of re-offending of the community cohort had risen (56.7% for those on Youth rehabilitation Orders).

B) What is the role for the Met in reducing youth re-offending in London?

The Met has the responsibility to prevent and investigate crime, ensure that the public are protected and where young people are involved, ensure that they are dealt with as vulnerable people, whether as victim or an offender.

Strategically, AC Helen King leads for the MPS in reducing youth re-offending and has established good links with the YJB at national level. Within London, Commander Stephen Watson represents the MPS at the Youth Re-offending Board and provides strategic direction and oversight surrounding the MPS contribution to the YOS teams in every London borough. In turn, Borough Commanders will nominate a member of their Senior Leadership Team to provide operational direction and oversight of the work of the Police Officer(s) who work within the borough YOTs.

Historically these officers were involved only with Out of Court disposals and Triage, but in line with the new Youth Justice Board Role of Police, published in July 2014, they have now begun to be involved with all those either released from Custody or on a Community Sentence from court. An Activity Matrix, augmenting the Role of Police and specific to the MPS, has been devised and launched with mandatory tasks ensuring all YOT police undertake some work in each of the identified areas of work, including those not historically undertaken.

The YOT Police officers are key to providing an instant and specialised intervention at an early stage should re-offending be identified as likely, bringing their skills to provide support but also enforcement with any conditions for the young person, and giving support to YOT colleagues in dealing with potentially difficult and violent young people. Given the increase in the community sentence cohort, the YOT officers work increasingly with colleagues in other units, from Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) to gangs teams both to support the young person and to help monitor compliance.

The YOT police officers are able to identify all young people who are not proceeded with from Police Custody, an important area which has not previously been subject of routine focus. This element of activity enables officers to identify those on the cusp of re-offending and to intervene to prevent any further offending behaviour. The Met has also committed to the Safer Schools programme, with officers being trained to prevent any low level offending within schools from escalating through a Restorative Justice approach. The Safer Schools Officers are key to early identification and intervention in escalation of risks likely to lead to offending and work closely with their YOT colleagues.

C) What partnership work does the Met undertake to tackle youth re-offending?

The Met supports the Youth Offending Team partnership and has strong links with the Youth Justice Board, at both a strategic and local level, enabling good practice to be quickly shared Pan London. This partnership is also maintained with the two Resettlement Consortium recently established in London.

Part of the local YOT police role is maintaining partnerships with other police units, such as Safer Schools, Youth Engagement Officers and Local Neighbourhood Teams, but also with 3rd sector voluntary agencies who can provide programmes and support designed to prevent re-offending. The Met has close links with Safer London Foundation, Princes Trust and St. Giles' Trust, and locally, YOT police will have links with voluntary agencies particular to their Borough.

The Met is also working with Health regarding those young people with mental health issues who either commit offences or are on the cusp of offending.

Work is also being undertaken with Youth Magistrates to discuss the options available for young people and to give confidence in the Youth Justice System.

D) What intelligence are local officers provided with about young offenders in their area at risk of re-offending?

The YOT police officers are responsible for ensuring all internal partners and especially Safer Schools and Local Neighbourhood Officers are aware of those young people on Orders and/or released from Custodial sentence and any conditions for bail or licence. Breaches of Orders and/or conditions are managed by the YOT police with support from local officers.

The relationships between the units is essential to ensure consistency of approach with the young people, but also to ensure public protection, especially where young people are re-settled out of their home areas. This includes liaison with police colleagues outside London.

The YOT officers, Safer Schools and local officers must work closely together to ensure re-offending does not occur, and it is essential that they share any information that may be key, such as a change in circumstances, bereavement, health etc.

Strategically work has been undertaken in partnership with the YJB and MOPAC to produce more accessible and recent data regarding offending and re-offending. This has resulted in a soon to be launched Dashboard, which will be available through MOPAC.

This is augmented by data that the Met collates on a daily basis regarding youth offending, and whilst is not proven data can give insight into potential issues and trends, enabling resources to be channelled effectively into emerging problem areas.

E) How do local officers work with young people at risk of re-offending?

There is a clear expectation that all operational officers, especially those on SNT's and Schools Officers, routinely engage young people positively and in a manner that supports a diminishing likelihood that the individual young person will offend or re-offend. The primary responsibility for working with young people at risk of offending however, falls to our YOT officers. It is these officers who will know who in their Borough is subject to any Court Order, or released from Custody, and they also manage all Cautions and Conditional Cautions.

They have a specific role to work with Youth Offending Team Colleagues to prevent breaches of any orders or conditions imposed on young people, usually by conducting a home visit to discuss any issues that may be preventing compliance, but where breaches occur, it is the YOT officer who will facilitate further action that may be needed.

The YOT officers have recently started to become more involved with young people on Court Orders or released from Custody, and work is ongoing to ensure they are involved in the intervention work undertaken by the Case Workers to strengthen the partnership working.

There are some police led and supported initiatives across London, for example, Kickz, Fight for Peace and Voluntary Police Cadets to which young people can be referred as part of their intervention. The YOT police will also refer to 3rd sector agencies where appropriate, for example Safer London Foundation are conducting work at Croydon regarding cases where sexual exploitation is suspected.

F) What specific challenges do you believe exist in respect of reducing youth re-offending?

i) The complex needs of the young people identified within the resettlement cohort in particular present challenges to those working with this cohort. The Youth Offending Teams are also dealing with more challenging young people on Community Sentences, which create challenges to the teams in regard to ensuring public safety, but also in working effectively with these young people to prevent re-offending.

ii) There are challenges regarding resourcing, particularly at this time when the partners within the Youth Offending Services are all subject to review of spending. The reduction in the numbers of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System has been recognised as reflecting the success of the Partnership, but a reduction in resources may impact not only

on the First Time Entrant rate, but also on the re-offending rate. The new Role of Police has increased the workload for YOT police at a time of review for all roles within the MPS. These pressures are being fully considered in the context of continuing to deliver critical services within the changed organisational structures which are emerging within and across partner agencies.

iii) Providing data that reflects the current position has been challenging. Published re-offending data that is proven means data is 18 months old. At a strategic level work has, and continues to be, undertaken to provide more useful and recent data, enabling resources to be channelled into effective interventions to prevent offending and re-offending. In this context the MOPAC dashboard is very useful.

iv) Other than those agencies involved in Youth Offending there is a lack of understanding of, and confidence in, the Youth Justice System. This can lead to information not being shared with all stakeholders, duplication of work undertaken and, on occasion within the Met, decisions on arrest being made without following the established process which should involve the YOT police.

G) What more do you believe MOPAC could do to support a reduction in youth re-offending?

We believe that in order to continue the reduction in youth re-offending rates, in the light of budget reductions and restructuring of services such as probation, it is necessary to take a more holistic approach to overall youth offending in London. An example of this approach might relate to supporting the early intervention work being conducted on many London boroughs with regards the Troubled Families agenda. This would help to ensure both that the first time entrant rate continues to fall but also that young people who offend can be better supported at home.

We would also like to see a more specific and earlier focus on young people who are at enhanced risk of offending, for example those within the care system. In the case of "Looked after Young People", early and positive engagement by the police and other agencies through their care providers reveals clear opportunity.

MOPAC have been a key strategic partner in driving the work regarding updating and providing more meaningful data, and, with the support of analysts from partner agencies, are soon to launch the Dashboard for London which will enable Boroughs to easily identify trends and issues.

Recognition of success is as important as challenging poor performance in driving improvement. It is in this regard that MOPAC could highlight and publicise positive initiatives that are likely to increase public confidence in the Youth Justice System.

A number of examples that could be highlighted exist and might include the successful partnerships with 3rd sector agencies, reducing First Time Entrant Rates, the increasing use and effectiveness of Triage and the successes being achieved within the Re-Settlement Consortia.

Report for the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee

Youth Reoffending and Resettlement: Part A

Comments in response to meeting on 8 January 2015

Author: Dr Alex Newbury, Senior Lecturer in Law and Criminology, University of Brighton

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute as a guest committee member to the MOPAC investigation on youth reoffending and resettlement last month. I wish to highlight a few key issues that may be of use in the continued investigation into addressing youth offending in London. This will be especially valuable if changes in the approach in the Capital can be utilised as benchmarks of success to improve youth justice provision and youth support nationwide.

I have a particular interest in young people and youth justice, with an expertise in qualitative research. I hope this may be of particular value as a counterpoint to the emphasis on quantitative, statistical data that is prevalent. Although statistical data is clearly of significant importance in providing an overview of the general situation across an entire cohort, or to compare changes over time, as highlighted by a number of the guest speakers during the meeting on 8 January 2015 statistics are not without significant flaws, both with regards to collection and interpretation. I will not repeat these points here as they are well covered already in the Transcript of the meeting. Instead, I am taking a more qualitative and reflective approach, which I hope will also be instructive to add to the discussions. The research findings that inform the following points include an in-depth empirical study undertaken by the author with young offenders who had received referral orders. This comprised observations of 41 youth offender panel meetings; 55 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with young offenders; and a number of further interviews with YOT workers, victim liaison officers, and volunteer panel members. The interviews with young offenders covered a range of issues including their attitudes towards their victims, their offending behaviour, the referral order itself, the justice system as a whole, and their YOT worker's involvement in particular, and their perceptions of the impact of alcohol on their offending behaviour.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of some key issues, informed by some of the questions posed in the 'Background Briefing' document circulated prior to the committee meeting.

Key Issues

- **Support**

YOT workers are frequently highly valued by young people as one of the first people who, they feel, have truly understood and supported them, do not judge them and help them to deal with problems they feel are most relevant to them. This is especially important for a cohort of young people who offend, as this frequently goes hand-in-hand with being labelled at school as 'troublesome', which results in a potential downward spiral of disengagement, truanting and spending time on the streets, resulting in crime or anti-social behaviour. One 15-year-old female offender interviewed commented,

‘In some ways I am glad I did get caught for it because it has taken me seven months to get help like this and without the referral order I wouldn’t have that help. No-one seemed to be interested in helping me before, it was like talking to a brick wall.’

On a related issue, although there has been progress in this area in the last decade, more needs to be done to address the lacuna of support for young people who are in the 15+ age group, especially if they are leaving care. Recognition is growing that 18 years is too young to be deemed ‘adult’, especially for care leavers who have a significant mix of social, emotional and financial needs. However, a much stronger and more cohesive approach is still needed to prevent this group of especially vulnerable young people from falling through the cracks in services. The criminal justice system is a blunt tool for trying to address these needs, and Social Services’ financial and personnel resources are frequently too overstretched by the needs of younger children, which means the 15+ age group can be left under-supported.

- **Alcohol**

The impact of alcohol may be a trigger for offending and risky behaviour. The perception of the importance of its impact was especially prevalent amongst many of the young female offenders interviewed – Appendix A, Table 1 sets out some instructive quotations about how far this cohort perceived that alcohol was a key factor in behaviour they classified as ‘abnormal’ for them. Although detailed discussion of the impact of alcohol was beyond the scope of the meeting in January, it is another key area that the committee may wish to consider during the investigation. The author would be pleased to give further details of her research in this area if this would be of interest to the Committee.

- **What Works?**

This is clearly a vital question, and some concrete issues such as addressing literacy and numeracy, employment, education (in its widest sense, and including alcohol education, anger management, relationships, etc.) are key tangible factors. However, what works with regards to beneficial interactions between a YOT worker and young person is quite intangible and yet of fundamental importance to success. Young people interviewed reported on several factors that they felt had helped them, either in their own lives or to stop reoffending – and frequently these two outcomes will overlap. The key factors highlighted by the young people included:

- A feeling of support
- Being listened to and understood
- Having a YOT worker that they felt was ‘on their side’ as many young people also often reported troubled relationships with school teachers and/or parents
- The belief that someone is there for *them* and is positive about them is paramount

The above may be of particular relevance in relation to the reported criticism of YOTs (set out on page 4 of the Background brief) made by the National Audit Office 2010 report ‘The Youth Justice System in England and Wales: Reducing offending by young people’ that “practitioners in the youth justice system do not know which interventions have the most

impact on reducing reoffending”, which put them in a “weak position” in not knowing what activities should be kept, and which should be stopped.

The finding that *what works* is actually really quite intangible is important: that it is more about a young person’s *perceptions* of support, and the almost casual conversations between a YOT worker and young person, which are undertaken alongside the planned ‘activity’, that have the greatest value. This is not to say that the choice of activity is not relevant and important: coaching younger children in football skills may bring self-esteem and fulfilment to one young person (which was the reparation element of his referral order); time and space to just talk through issues of concern may be most helpful for another; addressing housing issues; helping literacy skills (and in the meantime helping a care leaver to complete forms) may be the most beneficial for others. One size does not fit all, and thus it may not be possible for a YOT to state which particular activity is the most effective intervention, but the overarching theme of ***a feeling of support and care*** for that individual runs through all, and is what makes the intervention beneficial and the young person engage with it. This feeling of support is the least tangible, but most important element.

On a related issue, perhaps one of the best measures of success is how far there is a continued engagement by the young person with the project and their YOT worker/resettlement broker. To some extent (and notwithstanding this may mean that they are in breach of a court order), young people will ‘vote with their feet’ and if they perceive that an activity or person is unhelpful or unsupportive they will disengage.

- **Using statistics and targets on recidivism to measure success**

Several of the issues and problems relating to youth offending statistics were discussed in detail during the committee meeting, so I do not propose to repeat these here, but a few further issues that seem relevant to the discussion are:

- Some of the most significant issues that may impact upon youth reoffending are large intractable problems such as social inequality, social and economic disadvantage, family relationships, housing and young people who are not in education, employment or training. To a greater or lesser extent, they are beyond the scope of what can be addressed by YOTs: for example, high reoffending rates and geographical areas of socio-economic disadvantage frequently coincide. YOTs cannot affect this directly, but it will impact significantly on outcomes. It would seem unhelpful for them to be penalised for factors which are entirely outside their control and may end up being a ‘postcode lottery’ with one YOT appearing more successful due to such external factors.
- Reoffending rates can be difficult to monitor. This is compounded in relation to young people not only by them moving areas geographically, but also ageing and so moving from youth offending to adult probation teams.

- Reoffending rates are a blunt measure, frequently failing to take into account nuances regarding reduced frequency or severity of offending; or other enhanced life chances such as improved literacy or gaining employment that the YOT may have been instrumental in achieving.

Taking all the above points in to account, it would seem to be neither fair nor useful to use 'Payment by Results' for YOTs, when a significant number of these issues are beyond the scope of what can be changed by any individual YOT. In addition, and more fundamentally, the worst performing areas with greatest problems of recidivism, and therefore arguably the areas most in need of *more* not less resources, will potentially be the most likely to be perceived as 'failing' and thus face having their budgets cut. This is not seeking to say that if a particular service or intervention is demonstrably not working there is not a need for change, but that how success or failure is measured, and what change should be implemented, needs to be much more finely nuanced than purely by reoffending statistics and budgetary cuts. Finally, and somewhat tangentially, financial rewards or penalties also seem a strange approach for use with YOTs where the majority of workers are extremely vocational in their career, and not driven by money in this choice. This kind of incentivising seems to stem from a 'bonus culture' that is far removed from the realities of life as a youth worker.

Date – 26/02/2015

The views and comments expressed in this report are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the University of Brighton.

APPENDIX A

Table 1: Quotations from female young offenders reflecting on their offending and perceptions of their alcohol use – including reflections on interventions

Female young offenders - Interviewee details	Quotations
<p>Female, 16 years old: Resisting arrest, assault by beating, being drunk and disorderly.</p>	<p>“I regret really badly what happened.”</p> <p>“[Alcohol] brings out all my demons and it is really scary.”</p> <p>“I used to walk around the streets drinking, and would drink a whole bottle of vodka. That night we had had four bottles of Lambrini between 3 of us. A lot.”</p> <p>“It has helped me not to behave badly when I go out. I mean, we are going to drink, but my YOT worker helped me about drinking and she said to make sure I go out when I am calm and happy. So I am in a good mood when I go out and calm, not angry, so I don’t take that mood out with me.”</p>
<p>Female, 15 years old: Resisting arrest, assaulting a police officer, being drunk and disorderly.</p> <p>She had previously been helped by the same police officer on an earlier occasion outside a nightclub when she was so drunk she did not know what she was doing and required hospital treatment for alcohol poisoning.</p>	<p>“Oh God! It wasn’t him was it? That was the same policeman who helped me last time! That’s awful, I didn’t recognise him. ... I was so drunk.”</p> <p>“In some ways I am glad I did get caught for it because it has taken me seven months to get help like this and without the referral order I wouldn’t have that help. No-one seemed to be interested in helping me before, it was like talking to a brick wall.”</p>
<p>Female, 15 years old: Racially aggravated assault.</p>	<p>“I said I was sorry, and I said I was drunk, but that I knew that wasn’t an excuse. And I said I had a lot of remorse for what I had done; and</p>

	<p>just apologising and saying that I was genuinely sorry.”</p> <p>“My counsellor and the people at OASIS¹ really helped me... The alcohol counselling has helped me most, definitely.”</p>
<p>Female, 15 years old: Drunk and disorderly, assault by beating, resisting arrest, criminal damage.</p>	<p>“Well, I had been drinking with my friends and I had drunk most of a 70cl bottle of vodka on my own, which is a lot for me. I don’t drink a lot and I get drunk very easily, and that was so much for me. And then we went into a pizza shop and asked to use the toilet but they didn’t let us use the toilet. I can’t remember much of this; it is just what I have been told. I can’t actually remember anything.”</p> <p>“I found out loads! before I had thought I knew a lot about alcohol, but that after the quiz, I realised I didn’t know that much.”</p> <p>“They have helped me a lot. Since going there I have stopped drinking. Well, I will drink if it is for a special occasion, someone’s Birthday or something, but not like I did before. And the counsellor has helped me in choosing what drink to drink. I used to drink vodka, but that just made me angry and violent. ... Wine seems to be the only thing I can drink without getting violent. And she talked to me about units of alcohol and to see how much I drunk. And quizzes to see how much I knew about alcohol. And I didn’t actually know very much, although I thought I did before. I learnt a lot.”</p>

¹ OASIS is an organisation that aims to improve the lives and maximise the potential of women, children and young people affected by substance misuse.