

Open Report on behalf of Pete Moore, Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection

Report to:	Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee
Date:	25 November 2015
Subject:	Youth Offending Service – Status Report

Summary:

This report details the current performance within the Youth Offending Service (YOS) against national indicators following the service restructure which was implemented in May 2015.

The report outlines the current funding and finance position for the service and staffing resources within a multi-agency model.

The report will update the committee of current YOS work streams which contribute to prevention, reducing re-offending, reparation and safeguarding.

Actions Required:

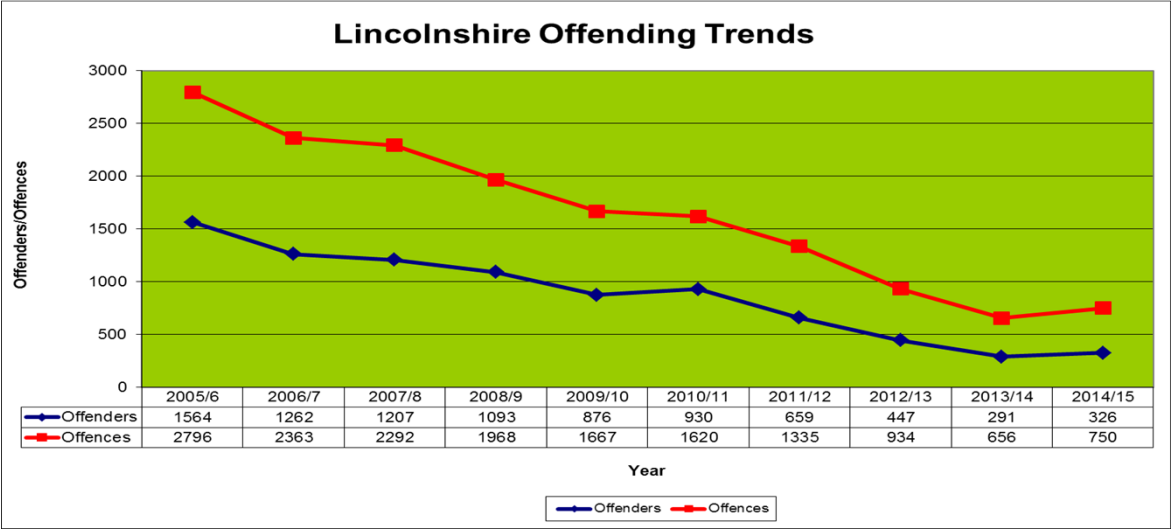
The Committee is invited to consider and comment on this report.

1. Background

Over recent years there have been several successes both locally and nationally in addressing youth crime, and this has undoubtedly contributed to improved longer term outcomes for children and young people. The crime statistics evidence within Lincolnshire has contributed to enhancing community safety and significantly reducing the likelihood of being a victim of crime that has been committed by children and young people. These positive reversals also enable the potentially negative perceptions of young people to be effectively challenged.

The net effect within Lincolnshire has mainly generated a consistent reduction in both offences and the number of young people committing offences, despite a small reversal in 2014/15. Consequently the conventional workload which is being channelled through the Youth Court system has declined over time. This is clearly evidenced by the increase in restorative justice disposals, the reduction of Youth Court sittings, closures of some youth courts and the decreased quantity of cases receiving statutory Court Orders.

Conversely, it must also be acknowledged that those individuals within the system are more complex and challenging, with multiple needs. Therefore, they require the most intensive input to generate change and decrease risk.



It is critical that the Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service remains relevant, innovative and responsive to the emerging changes in youth justice. Therefore, following the Fundamental Budget Review within Lincolnshire County Council in 2015, the Youth Offending Service has re-structured. This was done in order for the YOS to absorb an overall reduction of £300,000 in its core funding from the local authority, Police and Crime Commissioner and the Youth Justice Board (YJB). This has resulted in a reduction of approximately 10 full-time equivalents staff members across all grades including a complete revision of the management structure. The staffing reductions were achieved through both voluntary and compulsory redundancies.

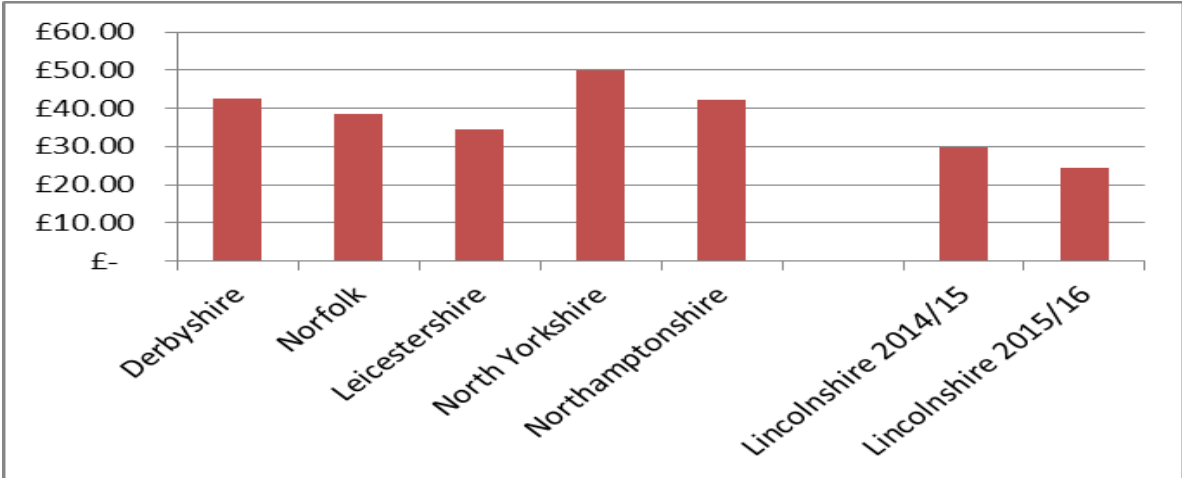
The pace of change within the youth justice system is only likely to continue, with Justice Secretary Michael Gove announcing on the 11th September 2015 that he has commissioned a national review of youth justice services. The review is intended to consider current evidence, and practice in preventing youth crime and rehabilitating young offenders. Furthermore, he will explore how the youth justice system can interact more effectively with wider services for children and young people. And finally, he will consider whether the current arrangements are fit for purpose.

Finance and Resources

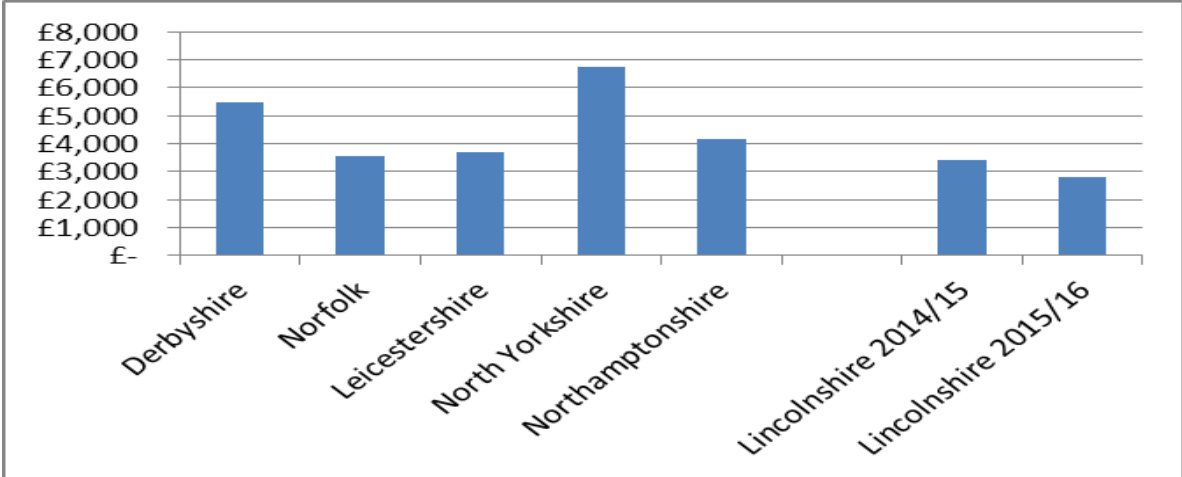
It is clear that we are operating within an extremely challenging financial context with budgetary pressures being exerted upon the entire Youth Offending Service core funding sources. Additionally, over time a significant disparity has arisen in respect of the national youth offending grant distribution and the overall make up of grants to individual services. The Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service has continually sought efficiencies, has been committed to driving out non-essential expenditure and has been prioritising the key objectives and areas of risk.

Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service has challenged that, within the existing funding formulas, the Youth Justice Board provides no financial credit or recognition for services in Lincolnshire that demonstrate value for money in managing to retain high levels of performance whilst working within tightening financial constraints.

The table below provides a clear visual representation that Lincolnshire has retained an excellent performance when compared against 'family' services whilst operating within a significantly lower overall budget. This is despite the 10-17 year old population of these services being very similar in size. It reinforces that the key performance measures remain very positive in terms of re-offending, custody and first time entrants within the criminal justice system and reflect the effective deployment of resources in critical areas of business.



This graph above shows the total YOS Budget allocation for every 10-17 Year old in the authority against regional family services. For example North Yorkshire receives £50 per young person and Lincolnshire will receive approximately £24 per person.



This above graph shows workload against total budget allocations for each Service.

This demonstrates that each young person supervised in Lincolnshire costs the service significantly less than all those within the comparative sample. The cost for each young person in Lincolnshire is just £2,781 for 2015/16 compared to North Yorkshire at £6,762 per young person.

The ability of Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service to absorb future funding reductions without compromising service delivery is clearly influenced by a number of factors. These factors include the recent re-structure and a context of uncertainty around the local authority grant commitment and locally negotiated funding settlements with the Police and Crime Commissioner. There is now a very clear reality that future funding reductions will inevitably correlate with staffing reductions whilst the service strives to deliver within a significant geographical area.

The need to generate savings has meant that the Youth Offending Service will be required to operate with an overall reduction in core funding amounting to approximately £300,000 for 2015/16. However those risks are heightened within this financial year as the Youth Justice Board are currently consulting with all Youth Offending Services regarding the need to generate further (in year 2015-16) national savings of approximately £12 million. The early indications are that this may represent a further individual 14% budget reduction in service funding (approximately £125,000 for Lincolnshire) on top of the 7.5% savings announced in April 2015.

Performance

(Commentary relates to attached performance data)

Lincolnshire YOS has a statutory duty and financial responsibility to the Youth Justice Board to give clear focus and priority to the three key performance outcomes of reducing first time entrants, reducing the use of custody and achieving a sustainable reduction in the rate and frequency of re-offending. However in accordance with the YJB Business Plan and strategic objectives a clear focus must be given to reducing re-offending rates within Lincolnshire.

The current rate of re-offending for children and young people in Lincolnshire (those that go on to re-offend within a 12 month period following their initial offence) sits at 29.3% against a regional comparison of 33% and a national re-offending rate of 37%. The recent development of a local re-offending measure will capture a better understanding of the offending cohort and provide a more recent picture of offending behaviour within Lincolnshire. It is envisaged that this will provide analysis which directs how resources are deployed and how they shape future interventions.

The number of first time entrants within Lincolnshire has seen a very slight increase in the last quarter. Whilst this rate can be influenced by Police charge decisions and the use of restorative options, it can also be supported by intelligence led preventative approach. Continued success around reducing first time entrants will be enhanced by a youth justice system which retains a focus upon early help and intervention. Working with all our partner agencies to accurately target and identify those young people at risk of offending must remain a goal as we move forward.

The current custody rates in Lincolnshire portray a positive picture and reflect the overall national reduction of young people in custody. Nationally there is a renewed focus on securing improved outcomes for young people leaving custody, and

Lincolnshire YOS is part of a regional initiative that seeks to ensure staff in custody and the community work collaboratively to ensure the rehabilitation and resettlement needs of young people are addressed. Particular attention is given to securing suitable and sustainable accommodation for release, access to appropriate health and substance misuse services and support for the family and carers of young people.

Remand Management

Remand management continues to represent a significant financial risk for the organisation. The cost of young people being remanded to youth detention accommodation can be as much as £700.00 per person each night. This cost is passed back in full to the local authority with young people on remand also acquiring Looked after Children (LAC) status which places both a financial and resources burden upon the YOS and Children's Services.

During 2014/15, a high profile case linked to a murder investigation in Spalding brought six young people into the Court system. Having been charged with grave offences the potential to be remanded into custody for an extensive period was extremely high. However through effective partnership working with both Children's Services and the Police this risk was mitigated and in doing so avoided youth detention costs of nearly £1,000,000 over a nine month period.

Prevention Activity and Early Engagement

During this performance year, prevention work has accounted for, on average, 25% of the total caseload. The criteria for YOS prevention activity has recently been refreshed to ensure a more targeted response to emerging concerns/behaviours. The screening of prevention referrals has been centralised to ensure consistency in decision-making, with direct input from seconded Police Officers to ensure all available information is taken into account in the decision making process.

Plans are underway to base YOS staff on a duty system within the West Parade Police station to support early engagement with children and young people. This also supports the effective and timely sharing of information and enabling the Police to be fully informed in their decision making. This may also create opportunities, where appropriate, to divert young people away from the justice system and use a restorative approach to address their behaviour.

The service is working in close partnership with the University of Lincoln to undertake a research study focusing on the emerging issue of adolescent to parent violence. This will capture learning across a number of partner agencies to scope the extent of this behaviour but crucially with a view to the development of evidence based intervention for practitioners.

Victims/Restorative Justice

Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service continues to strive for excellence in their victim services and this desire for increasingly higher levels of victim services is

evidenced at many levels. New targets have been identified within the Council Business Plan to fully measure and reflect victim engagement and satisfaction.

Lincolnshire YOS is working in conjunction with Lincolnshire Police in the 'Restore Project'. To date over 25 young people who have been arrested for shop lifting for the first time have been given the opportunity to attend the sessions along with input and representation from retail stores. This restorative project started in April 2015, initially in Lincoln, and has now expanded to Grantham. We have seen some excellent interaction with the young people and their parents and carers to fully understand the true impact of their offending behaviour.

The Service has also made the decision to invest in the Restorative Justice Councils (RJC) Quality Mark (RSQM). The RSQM requires YOS's to achieve set evidence-based standards to ensure the quality of restorative service delivery, which on successful completion provides a nationally recognised accreditation and quality assurance and confidence for victim of crime and the public.

Safeguarding

Lincolnshire YOS continues to promote and embed 'Signs of Safety' into its practice, and it is now integral to supervision, case discussions and practice observations. This strengths-based approach is consistent with that taken by Children's Services, and the alignment has been further strengthened by the co-location of Youth Offending staff with Family Assessment and Support Teams and/or Families Working Together Teams at three office locations. This co-location has facilitated improved communication and joint working between the two agencies.

Lincolnshire YOS is represented on all Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) forums, and contributes to working groups to ensure a joint response to shared concerns, such as Child Sexual Exploitation and the outcomes achieved by the county's Looked after Children.

Mental Health

There remain three seconded Nurse Specialists spread across the two area teams covering the whole of the county. Through partnership funding the service has recruited a dedicated full-time Clinical Psychologist. The expansion of the health team to include this role has enhanced the skill mix available within the service to meet the needs of this diverse population.

The new team will continue to provide a range of mental health interventions, as well as generic health interventions, and will keep supporting individuals to access universal services. A strong emphasis will be placed on achieving smoother transitions of young people into specialist psychological services, as well as seeking seamless transitioning into adulthood and thus into adult services. This development will also advance the support already available to young people with additional learning needs and enable the opportunity for some specialised assessments to be completed in-house, thus increasing the timeliness of interventions.

Private Residential Care Providers

Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service has played a central role in highlighting the issues of young people placed in Lincolnshire by other local authorities. These numbers appear to be increasing as does the subsequent demand on Police, Health, YOS and Children's Services. A task and finish group has been established through the strategic safeguarding board to establish a clear protocol to minimise the criminalisation of children in care. This will place clear responsibilities on care providers to demonstrate accountability and appropriately manage children before seeking Police involvement.

2. Conclusion

Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service continues to strive to be an exemplar of excellent practice in working with children and young people, victims of crime and our communities. The longer term future and viability of Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service will ultimately be shaped by a resilient, skilled and motivated workforce with a willingness to embrace emerging practice and work in even greater collaboration with key partners such as Police, Children's Services, Health and Families Working Together.

It is crucial that the service remains ambitious and is supported in efforts to utilise the extensive skill sets and clear strengths of a proven multi-agency model. Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service must adapt to remain relevant, and evidence its value. It must ensure it is fully capable of delivering its required commitments and appropriately responds to the rapidly changing political and financial environment within which it operates.

The new service structure will inevitably need to move away from some current aspects of 'in-house' direct delivery and facilitate provision from existing providers. It is also vital that we maintain a focus upon our designated performance indicators but promote better integration with all relevant stakeholders to maximise every element of our resources.

The service priorities for 2015/16 remain bold and the Lincolnshire YOS will continue to place the management of risk and safeguarding children as absolute priorities and will not seek to compromise on this. Key work streams around the transition between youth and adult services and the effective management of those at the greatest risk of re-offending are in development. The development of a refreshed and re-focussed Integrated Offender Management model will be a key cornerstone of partnership efforts to address offending within Lincolnshire. It is vital that young offenders are fully considered within the development of this model to ensure its true potential and impact is realised.

To be truly effective, the service must always endeavour to make a meaningful and positive difference in the lives of children and young people we supervise, but also intervene at the earliest possible opportunity. There are concerns that financial pressures may force many services to focus predominantly on the statutory work and this could be to the detriment of widening prevention activity and capturing the undoubted social and economic benefits that exist through early engagement.

Work within early intervention carries opportunities and can generate significant benefits in respect of minimising disruptive behaviour in school, exclusion or anti-social behaviour. Adopting a future focus and in turn reducing demand on statutory services remains more critical than ever as the resilience to a significant workload spike is now questionable.

It is vital that Lincolnshire YOS is consistently recognised as a service which raises aspirations and strives for the very best outcomes for children and young people in Lincolnshire. This will work to ensure children and young people in Lincolnshire maximise every opportunity to prevent their talent and potential being unfulfilled.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	YOS Performance Report

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Andy Cook (Manager- Youth Offending), who can be contacted on 01522 552367 or andy.cook@lincolnshire.gov.uk