

# Report of the Strategic Director, Place to the meeting of Bradford West Area Committee to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022

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## **Subject:**

WORK OF THE DISTRICT YOUTH SERVICE TEAM.

## **Summary statement:**

This report provides an overview of the work of the District Youth Work team and gives an update on work undertaken by the District Youth Service during the last 12 months.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:**

Young people in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods experience a greater range of issues and are more likely to be exposed to the risk of exploitation and risk of harm. In addition, young people from 'community of interest' groups can experience extra barriers in accessing services.

The work of the district Youth Team is focussed on supporting some of the districts more vulnerable young people to mitigate the impact of this occurring and to provide a response and support to specific issues and incidents.

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## **Portfolio:**

**Neighbourhoods and Community Safety**

## **Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Children's Services**

## **1. SUMMARY**

This report provides an overview of the work of the District Youth Work team and gives an update on work undertaken by the District Youth Service Team during the last 12 months.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Youth Service remains committed to its work around exploitation in all forms. Exploitation is a key element of our safeguarding children processes, and all staff are trained in safeguarding and contextual considerations through initial inductions and onward training.
- 2.2 Our locality based youth provisions, in open access and street based work, consistently support information, advice and guidance to young people to raise awareness around exploitation. This agenda is to ensure young people gain critical thinking skills and that they can identify when people do not have their good interests at heart. The area based teams are well placed to identify early those young people who are vulnerable to exploitation, or who are being actively exploited and to work directly, and through linking with other agencies ensure that the right support is given to each young person so that actions can be taken to protect the young person and to disrupt the perpetrators of their exploitation.
- 2.3 To enhance the area based youth work a District Team is in place that operates a 'step up/step down' approach to support some of the districts most vulnerable young people.
- 2.4 Breaking the Cycle has been recognised for their practice, having been evaluated by the home office, Warwick university and as part of the Ofsted inspection for children's services that identified that the service was effective. The work has been identified nationally as being innovative and good practice. In the last 12 months the work has had 2 national recognitions – one in the LGC Awards in the category of Innovation, and also in the Howard League for Penal Reforms.

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The District Youth Work Team comprises of a diverse range group of highly skilled Youth Work practitioners – the team is led by the Youth Service Development Manager, has an Advanced Practitioner, 3 senior workers, 8 full time youth workers, a behaviour support worker, a workforce development officer, 6 youth rights trainees, 2 administration support staff, a volunteering lead and a number of session leaders in charge and part time support staff. There are a number of staff who are in temporary contracts, linked to the temporary nature of some of the funding it receives. We have a number of new posts which are currently out to advert, which once recruited will support delivery of some of the newly funded upstream initiatives. A structure of the team is attached as appendix A
- 3.2 All full time youth workers working in Breaking the Cycle are trauma informed, and certified, having undertaken bespoke training they are certified Bronze (Trauma Aware) and Silver (Trauma Informed) practitioners and are due to become Gold

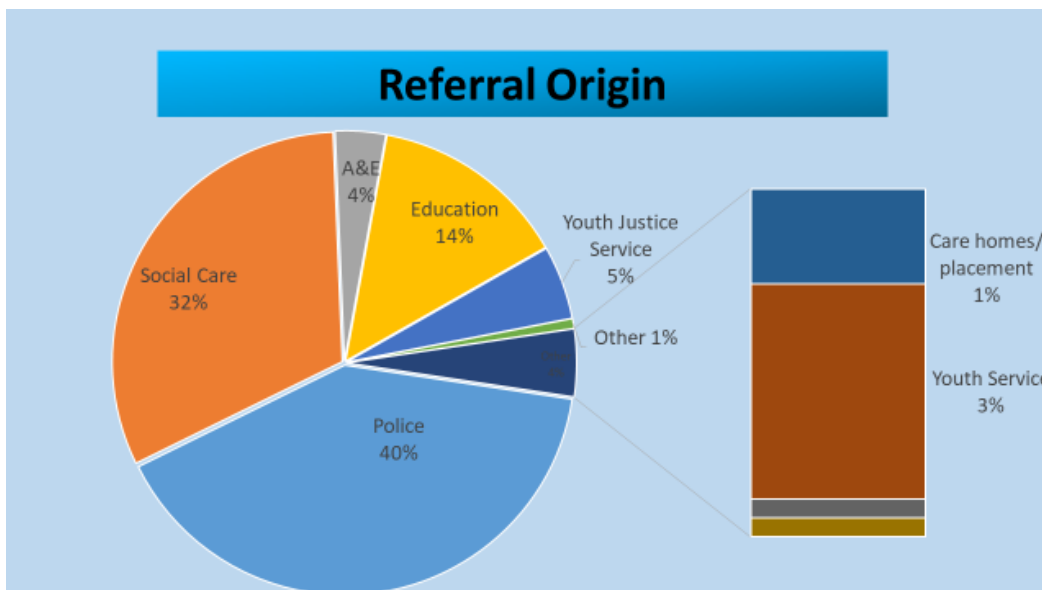
certified in late November. This means the Youth workers in the district team are well placed to work alongside the vulnerable cohort of referred young people who have experienced early childhood trauma, or who are facing trauma now as part of their ongoing exploitation.

- 3.3 The District Youth Work team, work across the whole district, operating from 2 operational bases, one sited in Shipley and one in Manningham. These bases provide space for 1-1 work, group work and office accommodation. They are available to access 24-7 in line with the needs of our delivery.
- 3.4 The Youth Service also have a district team of apprentices, recruited to work on the Unicef Childs Rights agenda this team of young people are undertaking level 3 learning in the college and are deployed into placements across the district.
- 3.5 The District Youth Work Team delivers the Breaking the Cycle project which provides an intensive intelligence led intervention to young people who are identified as being at risk of or who are being actively criminally exploited. The project works with young people, referred in by other professionals across the district where there are concerns or intelligence to suggest the young person is at risk or involved in serious, organised or violent crime, urban street gangs, county line trafficked, those identified as being actively criminally exploited or who may be exploiting others, or sometimes both, those who have higher than yellow Anti-social behaviour sanctions, drugs or weapons markers (as either users of, suppliers of or have been found in possession of), or who have out of character or unexplained missing incidents. Currently the team are working with over 500 individual young people.
- 3.6 Once a young person is allocated they will have a lead worker, but a number of workers in the team will work with a young person so as to not create a dependency and to ensure if we ever have to break a confidence, for example in respect of safeguarding, then the team can continue to work with individual young people, sliding in another known worker to continue the engagement. Each young person is in receipt of a bespoke and targeted intervention that is intelligence led.

Young people receive one of the following levels of intervention:

- Intensive – meaning we see a young person as much as is required to get alongside them and break the cycle of exploitation. This can mean that we see a young person every day, or several times a day/ night. Young people on intensive interventions can spend several hours with workers in order to keep them safe.
- Weekly – These young people are supported with a regular weekly intervention
- Lighter Touch – These young people tend to be in the step down part of the work where interventions have been delivered, we have seen change and a young person's exploitation has reduced to a degree that they are able to be brought back into more universal services.
- Keep in Touch – as the name would suggest, this is a checking in with young people at particular points to enable relationships to be able to be maintained and to ensure and support keeping the plans on track

- 3.7 Young people who are referred in to the Breaking the Cycle project have a bespoke 1-1 intervention that works alongside other professionals (including social care, health, education and police) to ensure the young person is flagged appropriately for their exploitation and their risks are appropriately managed, and risks of harm reduced. The team use a resilience framework to evidence distance travelled and work every day with colleagues through the risk management meeting to ensure the intervention is making a difference. The Service is also part of the monthly MACE meeting that looks to creatively work with young people who are 18 plus and where there are still concerns about their exploitation.
- 3.8 Referrals to Breaking the Cycle Project are made by a wide range of other professionals with Police and Social Care making up the largest majority of the referrals received. These can be in response to calls for service, or through thresholds being met, or through a professionals concern for a young person.



- 3.9 The district youth work team provide interventions that are district wide – the work does not lend itself to alignment to wards or constituencies, as many exploited young people present and are exploited across boundaries across the district, West Yorkshire and wider afield. The team work closely with Children’s Social Care Emergency Duty Team providing an out of hours’ response service that sees workers collecting young people who have been county line trafficked and found in different parts of the country. This can mean long trips at hours that are routinely classed as unsociable and overnight. We actively support the National Referral Mechanism and the identification for national flags for Childrens exploitation where appropriate. A child taken into police protection is often supported by members of the team, and often our work can start in the early hours of the morning in the back of a van, on a journey back to a place of safety. Sometimes this work brings young people back into the district, other times we support young people at locations outside of the district until a time that a placement of safety can be identified. Where children are placed out of district and are known to the service we endeavour to continue the support and engagement in preparation for returns to the district.

3.10 The team are currently working with 518 open cases, having had referrals totalling 1369 in the lifetime of the project. The 518 open cases are broken down as below:

BD1	BD2	BD3	BD4	BD5	BD6	BD7	BD8	BD9	BD10
5	36	31	48	42	34	41	30	27	35

BD11	BD12	BD13	BD14	BD15	BD16	BD17	BD18	BD19	BD20
0	11	20	11	16	8	12	24	1	8

BD21	BD22	LS29	Out of district
35	18	16	9

Males	Female
89%	11%

NB we have seen a 3% increase in females over the last 12 months

Postcodes captured indicate place of residency of young person at point of initial referral and not necessarily where they continue to live during the intervention or where their exploitation takes or has taken place.

Risk indicators – identified / evidenced at initial referral

Serious, Organised or violent crime	29%
Urban Street Gangs	46%
County Line Trafficked	32%
Criminally Exploited / Exploiting others	62%
In receipt of a higher than yellow ASB Sanction	42%
Weapons marker (user, supplier, possession)	35%
Drugs marker (user, supplier, possession)	46%
Out of character / unexplained missing incident	27%

This figure has only been captured in recordings in the last 6 months

3.11 Recognising that the work of Breaking the Cycle is focussed on supporting those who are criminally exploited the team have secured further funding to upstream the work and this enables work to take place where there are early indicators of exploitation. This includes work in the A&E department at BRI hospital 7 nights a week, working 4pm to midnight the team see young people who attend hospital due to incidents of violence, sharp instrument injuries or with injuries that do not match their explanation. The team will also work with those who present with contributing factors to exploitation like drug or other substance misuse, overdoses and those in mental health crisis.

3.12 This work has seen hundreds of interventions with young people from across the district and provides support to young people as they go through treatment services at the hospital, which includes on ward and at point of discharge there is an onward support offer. This gives continued support, building on the relationships started in the hospital environment. This work is highly respected and has proven to be successful at identifying early signs of exploitation. The team work closely with clinical staff in the department to ensure the voice of young people is heard and that they get the right support during their stay in the department.

- 3.13 At a recent Area Committee meeting in the Bradford South area one of the young people who attended from the local youth club highlighted the value of having met and been supported by youth workers whilst in attendance within the A&E department. He shared his journey and how the support and introduction to the wider work of the service had supported him to become a young leader within the area.
- 3.14 The work of the Breaking the Cycle A&E Team has recently nominated in the Council Service Excellence Awards and were finalists in 2 categories - Team of the Year and Partnership and Collaboration.

tweet from the partner Bradford Teaching Hospitals



A recent communication came from a young person in the form of a Thank you card, it said;

*'Dear Youth Workers, a young person rarely tells a youth worker that a fist bump or a smile is all that they can reveal. I wanted to say thank you for taking the time, thank you for being there when I needed you and thank you for seeing me every day, and for your guiding hand and support.'*

A grandparent sent a message to the team saying;

*'E has attended Bradford Royal A&E a few time recently – I don't know what we would have done without the outstanding care concern and professionalism and help we received from the youth workers – they were my saving grace in a time when I was desperate and I didn't have a clue about what was going on and the things that were impacting on E's life. The workers calmly supported E and gained trust on each hospital visit E had, they appeared like magic and helped in so many ways. Everyone has been brilliant and after leaving hospital the support continued - E now attends the local youth club',*

- 3.15 The district team also provide a service to young people in crisis through the work of the focussed deterrent car. This sees police and youth work colleagues working

together across the district deployed to live time incidents of serious violence, with a remit of working together to prevent incidents of violence reoccurring once victim and perpetrator have been removed from a street based incident. The team is deployed in the aftermath of incidents of serious violence and fill the vacuum often left when the victim has been taken to hospital, suspect arrested and what is left young people in the streets.

- It is de-briefing young people after an event who haven't been directly involved but might have witnesses it.
- To speak with witnesses of serious violence after an incident to see if they will support prosecutions or consent to interventions and support.
- To deploy into areas in which have high levels of ASB / concern around child exploitation to engage with young people.
- To deploy alongside proactive police and partner's resources, to de-brief tactics such as stop and search.

3.16 Officers undertaking this work with Youth Workers are positive about the difference made with one officer recently feeding back to their Inspector that:

*"It was the best shift she has worked in a long time and how her eyes have been opened to the work that Breaking the Cycle does. She had no idea how vulnerable some of the youths are that you work with, and she could not believe how they opened up to the youth worker and the valuable intelligence they were offering up when speaking to them.*

*Most of the caseload is in the area where the police officer works she realised that one of his caseload is one that she had referred a few months ago. It has given her faith that the system works and the referrals we make are actioned. She is going to go back to her team and reiterate how valuable the referrals are.*

*It is clear that the partnership between the Youth Service Breaking the Cycle and the Bradford District Policing is working and that Bradford is leading the way in this level of partnership working.*

3.17 The work of the district youth work team is keen to where ever possible step young people back into mainstream and universal provisions. Our wider area based youth work provisions provide a suitable support for some young people, whereas for others the step down process is following a specific interest, for example boxing or football. We have seen a number of our young people who have been supported by Breaking the Cycle step into opportunities provided by the District team including kickstart and traineeships, which has given viable alternatives to criminal lifestyles for some of our young people. This is an area we are keen to further develop and we have been working with Skills House on this matter.

3.18 The Youth Service, as part of its district wide offer provides workforce development to the youth work practitioners working across all parts of the district. Over recent months the service has inducted new starter staff, and provided training that has developed understanding of world affairs and the impact these have on our district. The "solutions not sides" sessions were organised to provide an informative understanding of the Palestine situation. This packed training session enabled

youth workers to have a safe space in which to discuss the situation and to understand its impact on the districts citizens. This training is to empower youth work staff to start and feel increased confidence to have difficult conversations with young people in youth work settings.

- 3.19 The district team has also utilised their skills and knowledge and are the provider of training around county lines and criminal exploitation for the district wide multiagency Bradford Safeguarding Partnership. This has seen large numbers of people who work with young people from a variety of settings trained to spot and be more exploitation aware. 1080 young people and 90 professionals in the last year have received one of our awareness raising training packages.

Every Neighbourhood Policing Team have also had a bespoke awareness and training package about the work of the Breaking the Cycle team. We have also delivered training to 2 youth club settings outside of district, a health centre / GP Practice team and students and staff at the college in Shipley and Bradford.

From this extensive delivery we have received lots of positive feedback about the value of the training delivered – a flavour of the feedback is captured in the quotes, shown in appendix B

Our training calendar continues to grow and we are developing new packages of training to support understanding and awareness around exploitation that is linked to finances including money muleing, Esports, Loot boxes and Microtransactions and safer sharenting (pictures you share online). These new packages will be delivered alongside those currently offered around county lines, weapons and exploitation.

- 3.20 The Youth Service has run a very successful kickstart programme, recruiting 11 young people to be trained to become sports leaders. Each participant has had part of their working week in their own learning where they have worked towards gaining a range of sports qualifications, and part of their week where they have worked in placements in a range of locations that has enabled them to put into practice their sports learning. As they have come to the end of their kickstart placements a number of the young people have gone on to secure employment with the Council and with some of our partner organisations.
- 3.21 The district team run a number of district wide youth work opportunities – the team headed up the 100 young people to Coventry residential, taking 100 young people on a cultural trip to the Capital of Culture city of Coventry to explore how they had involved young people in their capital of culture delivery. The involvement of young Bradfordians within the Bradford bid was considered to be one of the strengths in securing Bradford as the 2025 City of Culture.
- 3.22 The District Team have also run the recent “Takeover Challenge” where we invite young people to take over the roles of key decision makers in the District. This saw the leader of the council and the Childrens Portfolio Holder being involved in takeover and sharing their day with young people. This included attendance at the executive meeting and spending time in the leader’s office. For many young people this presents an opportunity to be heard, directly by those who make and influence



decisions within the district and this has proven to be empowering for young people who have taken part.

- 3.23 Alongside the core work of the District Youth Work team is a plethora of additional duties that the team facilitates and responds to – these include detached youth work into hotspot areas or in response to Community tensions to support reassurance and engagement alongside area based youth work teams. Our work forms an integral and responsive part of special operations such as Bonfire night operations and visits to the city by judges and VIPs. We provide Youth Workers to large scale events in the city centre, providing a “lost children” service, alongside detached and youth interventions during large events. We do wherever possible look to find creative solutions to emerging youth issues in the district – we pride ourselves on the flexibility of the team and the responsive nature of our work across all our service areas – a recent email from a Bradford East elected member acknowledged the value of the work:

*‘I would like to thank you and the breaking the cycle team and all others that were involved, for your help and assistance in the urgent matter of xxxxx where some of the buses were vandalised, the response of the team to the matter is appreciated by the bus company and the council and I am sure by the residents of Bradford as they do not wish to see their bus service disrupted by few mindless individuals. Your team does great work and make sure young people do not get in trouble. Once again thank you for everything the team has done, I will be highlighting their good work in the Bradford East Area committee too as it is important that everyone in decision making positions need to be aware of the work our teams do and how important they area to our areas and district’.*

#### **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 The District Youth Service Team is funded through a combination of Council budget (Children’s Services & Public Health) external grants (Violence Reduction Unit) and ‘fee earning’ externally commissioned services (Health).

The overall budget for the District Youth Service Team is £1,088,000

We are expanding some areas of our work into a wider West Yorkshire footprint and this will see further traded services developing over the coming 12 months.

#### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

The implementation of the planned budget for the Youth Service is subject to the internal risk management plan of the Council and progress is reported to the Place Departmental Management Team.

#### **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

There are no legal implications apparent within the context of this report.

#### **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

Young people in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods experience a greater range of issues and are more likely to be exposed to the risk of exploitation and risk of harm. In addition, young people from 'community of interest' groups can experience extra barriers in accessing services.

The work of the district Youth Team is focussed on supporting some of the districts more vulnerable young people to mitigate the impact of this occurring and to provide a response and support to specific issues and incidents.

## **7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no sustainability implications apparent within the context of this report.

## **7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

There are no greenhouse gas emission implications apparent within the context of this report.

## **7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

Young people from across Bradford West engage in the work that is delivered by the District Youth Work team that supports the objectives of the District Community Safety Plan.

The Community Safety Partnership and the Office of the Deputy Mayor, through the Violence Reduction Unit, supports the work of the District Youth Work Team.

## **7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Some of the work of the District Youth Work team is undertaken with young people who are highly vulnerable and who have been in 'high risk' situations. Engagement with the Team by young people is voluntary and always carried out with their agreement and support.

## **7.6 TRADE UNION**

There are no trade union implications apparent within the context of the report.

## **7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

The work of the District Youth Work team takes place on a 'needs basis' which can include some or all wards at any point in time. Resources and support are targeted through referrals and young people presenting in A&E and is generally not directly related to individual wards.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

There are no 'not for publication' items.

## **9. OPTIONS**

The majority of the work is targeted and responds to the specific requirement of funding providers. Notwithstanding, Bradford West Area Committee is asked to note

the report and the work of the District Youth Work team, providing any recommendations for how services can be tailored to better respond to vulnerable young people living in the Bradford West constituency.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the work undertaken by the Youth Service District team, as detailed in this report be welcomed.
- (2) That staff working in the District Youth Service Team be congratulated on the quality and impact of the work they are delivering to the young people and communities across the Bradford district, and specifically young people in the Bradford West area.

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix A District Youth Service structure chart

Appendix B Feedback from participants in Youth Service training.

Appendix C Case Studies from Breaking the Cycle work

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None