



FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Families:

2007 saw the development and successful implementation of the Plymouth Family Support Project, which works with some of the most criminogenic families across Plymouth.

These families must engage with the support offered or risk losing their tenancy. The government Respect agenda (now Youth Task Force) has pledged £18 million over the period 2007/08 to 2010/11 to support 53 family intervention projects across the country, including Plymouth.

There is an expectation of a tapered mainstreaming of the Plymouth Family Intervention Project with a continued injection of Youth Task Force funding along with other partner commitments.

Young People:

It is estimated that since 2005 6 per cent of Plymouth's young people aged 10 - 17years (24,300) have been arrested for a crime¹

No young person is pre-disposed to commit acts of crime in later life. This is influenced by their life-chances, events and risk factors that determine their vulnerability to criminal activity. There is a close association between young people and Criminal Damage, anti-social behaviour, Violent Crime and Acquisitive Crime – the three priority crimes of the CDRP

Young people are more likely to become a victim of crime in the summer and autumn culminating in a highpoint in October / November, probably reflecting the social calendar e.g. Halloween and Bonfire Night. However in 2007 there were less young people as victims in Plymouth than in either 2006 or 2005 and the trend is downward.

There were however more youth crimes in Plymouth during 2007 than in 2006 and the trend is upward.

Since the Strategic Assessment of 2007 was written all crime in the City has fallen by nearly 8 per cent. However, further analysis is being undertaken to determine whether youth crime is rising despite this. Youth offending appears to be decreasing with regards to re-offending. Data held by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) points to a decline in re-offending amongst their clients

There is a link between unauthorised absence/truanting from school and crime² with nearly three quarters of truanting students admitting offending in the previous 12 months. This led the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to conclude that intervening early to tackle 'truancy' and exclusions was vital to preventing youth crime³. There is a lack of available information locally to indicate whether Plymouth follows this national pattern, Plymouth is below the 2006/07 national average for unauthorised absences and only slightly above the national average for authorised absences⁴.

There is limited data exchange between schools and the CDRP regarding weapons, drugs, truancy and fixed term exclusion and suggestions have been made that this could be improved.

Plymouth's Children's Safeguarding Board has identified that the single biggest fear amongst children at school is "being bullied" and there are concerns about misuse of mobile telephone technology in schools, and internet technology outside schools for the purpose of bullying and harassment of pupils and staff.

¹ (Plymouth Young People's Substance Misuse Commissioning Group, 2007).

² The Youth Justice Board (YJB) 2000: national research undertaken for the YJB found that children who intentionally do not attend school are far more likely to commit criminal offences

³ (from BBC news report 'Truancy Link to Youth Crime', March 2000).

⁴ (Plymouth City Council, Children's Services Department, October 2007)

Plymouth NASUWT⁵ are concerned at the level/issue of poor behaviour across schools in Plymouth. They are offering to work with strategic partners to provide more practical training and support for all school staff and for those staff outside of schools who deal with 'problem' students.

The Police currently run joint Police/Education Welfare patrols, but there is an ambition to increase these in the future.

Youth Justice Plan 2008-09:

Each Youth Offending Service (YOS) is required to submit an annual plan to the national Youth Justice Board laying out its strategic plans for reducing offending and re-offending across its area of operation

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) work of the YOS is led by the partnership within the Safe Strong theme and sub group work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Effective local partnership working has ensured that strategic objectives linked to youth crime reduction are incorporated as indicators in the LAA and the Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2011.

The Youth Justice Plan sets out a range of activities and interventions focused around vulnerable young people including a range of prevention programmes, addressing substance misuse, mental health, accommodation and other related risk-taking behaviour in order to prevent offending and reduce re-offending.

Plymouth Children & Young People's Plan 2008-11⁶:

This Plan sets out the City's shared priorities to achieve the vision that:

'We want all our children to live, grow, achieve and exceed in their hopes for the future'

There are five key priorities that will support the CDRP Partnership Plan 2008-11 which are:

- Priority 3** - Reduce bullying in the city, both in and out of school
- Priority 4** - Continue to strengthen safeguarding services
- Priority 5** - Reduce children and young people's accidents and injuries
- Priority 8** - Reduce risk-taking behaviours such as substance misuse, unprotected sex and criminal activities
- Priority 9** - Improve opportunities for young people to make a positive contribution

For each of the above Priorities, there are detailed implementation plans outlining key actions for delivery.

The Youth Crime Action Plan 2008:

Youth crime has been at the heart of the Government's approach to making our streets safer and to dealing with anti-social behaviour. The Youth Crime Action Plan makes it clear that those who

⁵ NASUWT - Teachers' trade union representing members in all sectors of education and teachers in all roles including heads and deputies

⁶ http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/web_cyp_plan-2.pdf and http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/210208_needs_analysis_draft_8-2.pdf

offend will face tough, effective penalties and at the same time we have focused greater effort than ever before on preventing young people going astray.

The vast majority of young people make a positive contribution to society, but a minority of young people continue to blight their communities by breaking the law and behaving in an anti-social way. We estimate that 5 per cent of young people are responsible for over half of youth crime. We believe that we are increasingly able to identify these young people early and can intervene to address the root causes of their behaviour, which includes supporting and challenging their parents to meet their responsibilities.

The proposals in this Action Plan emphasise the fundamental importance of providing services to young people and their families which have a consistent approach to assessment, early identification and targeted support.

This Action Plan proposes a strong cross-government package of measures to overcome these challenges and sends a clear message that youth crime will not be tolerated. These measures are based on the 'triple track' approach of enforcement in response to offenders, non-negotiable support to those who need it and intervention to prevent problems before they spiral into criminal behaviour. We will achieve this by:

- taking tough action to keep our streets safe – dealing with gangs and young people out of control;
- expanding the provision of the most effective early and targeted preventative interventions;
- tough, visible and fair justice, giving local people a say;
- ensuring strong and effective custodial sentences for the most serious and prolific offenders;
- improving ongoing support for children following the end of their sentence and improving the education of young offenders;
- clarifying and strengthening the collective responsibility of local authorities and local partners, including YOTs working together through children's trusts to prevent youth crime and reduce re-offending.

The YCAP sets out a “triple track approach” to tackling youth crime – enforcement, non-negotiable challenge and support, and prevention.

The plan endorses and builds on many of our existing prevention initiatives, such as Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIP) and also our improvements in custody and commitment to effective resettlement.

We welcome the plan's clear message about the need for wider services for children and young people to contribute more to preventing offending and re-offending. In particular, we are pleased to note the recognition of the critical role of the multi agency Youth Offending Service and the proposal to strengthen Management Boards.

This strategic development echoes our vision of an effective youth justice system, where more young people who offend are caught, held to account for their actions and stop offending, and where young people receive the support they need to lead crime-free lives.

For those young people who do offend, the plan endorses and recognises many programmes which are already in place or to be soon in place, including:

- Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP)
- Intensive fostering
- Resettlement and Aftercare Provision
- Restorative Justice
- YOS workers in police stations

The YCAP's emphasis on improving education for young people in custody supports and strengthens our existing strategy. We will work with partners to develop more detail on the future of custodial settings and with local authorities to progress the proposals on joint commissioning of services for the secure estate. The commitment to improving resettlement and continuity of care for young people leaving custody is particularly welcome.

Together with our partners, the YOS look forward to expanding the range of support currently on offer and will be responding fully to the consultation questions in the plan.

Chair of YJB - Frances Done said: *"The plan sets a clear direction for the future of youth justice, building on many of the achievements of the past decade. For youth justice to be effective, a wide range of agencies within and beyond the Criminal Justice System have to work together, with sufficient resources, for the benefit of children, young people and local communities."*

"We look forward to playing a pivotal role in implementing the initiatives outlined today."

Young Runaways:

The Plymouth Young Runaways project is a multi-agency team established to respond to missing children incidents. In 2005/06 these totalled 1,323 and in 2006/07 totalled 1,668. The project debriefs young people on their return home and works with families and young people to reduce further episodes and helps in locating and supporting young people who run away. This project was piloted under the Neighbourhood Renewal scheme, but has now been mainstreamed and expanded to support young runaways across the city, and viewed as a 'centre of excellence'.

The project recorded the following reductions in runaways during 2006/07 (whilst other areas not benefiting from the project continued to experience a 27.18 per cent increase):

Barne Barton Qtr 3 - 26, Qtr 4 - 9
 North Prospect Qtr 3 - 29, Qtr 4 - 16
 Stonehouse Qtr 3 - 28, Qtr 4 - 13

Persistent young runaways are seven times more likely to commit crime, and The Youth Justice Board suggests 40 per cent of young offenders have been reported missing, with "careers" in crime beginning when they are missing.