



Meeting Title	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Play and Youth Service and County Lines
Meeting Date	28 th January 2021

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1. Overview

The Play and Youth service delivers a range of social and recreational activities for children and young people between the ages of 5 – 16.

In 2018/19 the service went through a realignment programme, to develop a targeted service delivery. The main drivers for the change in service delivery was two-fold:

- A cut in the available budget that led to staff redundancies and a reduced service delivery.
- The concern regarding serious youth violence and the emergence of County Lines.

County lines has been a concern since 2017. A high proportion of the young people involved have previously had contact with the Police and released under investigation for lengthy periods of time. The young people are from a range of ethnic and social backgrounds and are usually aged between 13 and 17 (However, there is limited knowledge into the impact of county lines on young boys from the Asian community). We have had young people found across the country, including, Oxford, and London. We have also had young people found more locally in areas like Grantham, Newark, Bingham, and Mansfield. We have had several parent self-referrals which has highlighted substance misuse and links to criminal exploitation.

There is work ongoing within the Exploitation and Violence Reduction (EVR) Hub, to map these young people and daily access to public protection notices has enabled the service to garner valuable information, which is shared across Early Help.

It is important to note that the approach from the EVR Hub and Play and Youth Service is to treat these young people as victims first. It also needs to be noted that the Play and Youth Service (along with the wider Early Help directorate) would benefit from additional resources to work with this cohort of young people.

Currently the Play and Youth Service deliver sessions from the following bases:

- North Locality - Bulwell Riverside Play and Youth
The Ridge Adventure Playground
- South Locality - St Ann's Play Centre

Clifton Young Peoples Centre
Oliver Hinds
Meadows Youth Centre (waiting for risk assessments before commencing sessions)

- Central Locality - Forest Fields Play Centre
Phoenix Adventure Playground

2. Partnership working

To ensure the realignment had minimum impact on the service available to young people, the work continues to develop links with statutory and community providers to deliver an additional offer alongside play and youth to increase opportunities for young people:

- **Youth Justice Service (YJS)** – to ensure an effective pathway is in place between both services. This enables shared expertise in identifying, supporting and signposting those young people at greater risk of Serious Youth Violence and County lines. This includes effective information sharing, joint working, access to interventions, resources and best practice.
- **EVR Hub** – Currently two play and youth staff are seconded into the EVR Hub. The EVR hub is staffed by Targeted Youth Support Workers who have been directly recruited because of their ability to engage and work with young people with difficult to manage or offending behaviour. This has ensured that play and youth staff have developed a better understanding of the needs of that cohort and are better placed to provide 1 to 1 or group work that helps to address their offending and wider needs.
- **Voluntary Groups and Area Based Grant Partners** – Since the realignment of the service, the Operational Manager (supported by the area based team managers) have worked closely with the city's voluntary groups and Area Based Grant partners to ensure that there continues to be universal services for all children and young people to access. This has enabled the service to focus on a targeted service delivery. The development of these partnerships has meant where partners are able to demonstrate a particular skill in engaging this cohort, we are able to work with those partners to ensure effective 1 to 1 or group activity is available for those young people in greatest need
- **Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Outreach team** – The YJS/EVR Hub has received funding from the YEF, to develop an outreach team to work alongside play and youth to engage with our most risky young people. Recruitment and development of this team is currently underway and should be completed within a few weeks. Part of the bid has also enabled us to provide three of our partners with additional funds to work with this cohort of young people.
 - *£192,500 award for detached youth work across the city*
 - *1 senior and 4 play and youth workers*
 - *6 sessions of delivery two one-hour session each night Wed- Friday*
 - *£60,000 awarded to three voluntary organisations*
 - *Passages*
 - *Al-hurrayya*
 - *Spoken Substance*
 - *£6,000 for specialist training with Craig Pinkney for on road youth work.*
 - *£5000 for running costs for the Van (restricted from use under lockdown)*

- **Schools and Alternative Provisions (Aps)** – Play and Youth and EVR hub staff regularly work in schools and APs delivering 1 to 1 or group work activities, centred on county lines, knife crime and serious youth violence. They are also in regular contact with Police in schools' to share information and support interventions.
- **Children's Integrated Services (CIS) and Targeted Family Support Team** – Play and Youth Service staff work closely with the wider CIS directorate to engage with those young people deemed to be at greatest risk of Serious Youth Violence, Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation or risk of coming into care
- **Community Cohesion** - Staff share information and work with the Community Cohesion Team to ensure that where there are 'hotspot' areas, or 'difficult' young people, we are present to offer support and activities.

3. Information sharing

To ensure services are being coordinated effectively and information is being appropriately shared, staff attend the following meetings to inform decision making:

- **Child Criminal Exploitation Panel (CCEP)** – CCEP shares relevant information and coordinates multi agency actions to safeguard and promote the welfare and reduce the risk of harm to others from young people identified through partners and the CCEP.
- **MASE Panel** – As with the CCEP panel above, with the focus is on sexual exploitation
- **Out of Court Disposal Panel** – this is a multi-agency panel, supported by YJS staff and the Police to divert young people away from the criminal justice system. They do this by delivering an out of court disposal and ensuring that they get the support and intervention that they need to address any offending concerns and not have the medium to long term future disadvantaged because of a court order.
- **Ending Youth Violence** (community partnership meeting) – a community partnership involving several community groups and supported by the Violence Reduction Unit and Crime and Drugs Partnership.

4. Training

Staff have also been given additional specialist training to ensure that they can undertake targeted work and address Serious Youth Violence and County lines. Including;

- Choice and Consequence training alongside YJS colleagues
- Working with young women affected by gangs
- Targeted Youth work
- Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation Training
- Asperger's and ASD training
- SEND training

5. Service delivery and attendance

Due to the impact of Covid 19, the number of sessions and young people that can be engaged has been impacted. During the first lockdown March – July P&Y did not deliver any sessions on sites but worked delivering resource packs and supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing by telephone contact and detached work.

Between July and December 2020, the following targeted sessions have been delivered:

- **North Team** - 189 sessions, 1426 young people attended
- **Central Team** – 185 sessions, 1323 young people attended
- **South Team** – 164 sessions, 858 young people attended (attendance at sessions have been limited due to team size and staff sickness)