

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM**

### ***Executive Summary***

*This report is submitted by the Director of Social Services and the Director of Personnel and Policy. Its purpose is to provide Members with an update on developments taking place in the Wirral Youth Offending Team in several key areas. These are: i] the implementation of Referral Orders from April 2002; ii] developments in restorative justice activity; iii] the development of services to young people who offend where substance misuse is a contributory factor.*

*Consequently this report seeks Members' approval to create the following posts:*

- *One new administration post to support the implementation and development of the Referral Order service; Scale 6 (Sc 26-28) £15,823-£19,014.*
- *Two substance misuse worker posts to be employed by the Youth Offending Team. PO1 (SCP 33-36) £22,341-£24,072.*

*Dedicated funding is already available from the Youth Justice Board in relation to the three aforementioned posts*

*Additionally, Cabinet are asked to agree to:*

- *Realign the YOT Manager's post to reflect the increase in duties and ensure the Youth Justice Management Board attracts candidates of sufficient calibre to fill the vacant post. The grade of the post will move from PO14 (SPC 46-49) £31,254-£33,384 to EPO6 £35,217-£37,239 to take account of the changes.*
- *redesignation of the current Social Services Support Worker within the Youth Offending Team post due to the significant expansion in duties undertaken by the post to develop restorative justice response within the local youth justice system and changing from its existing grade of Res C Bar A/B (SCP 22-25) £15,741-£17,265 to PO1 (SCP 33-36) £22,341-£24,072.*

## **1 Background**

1.1 The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 established a new sentencing option available to the Youth Court – the Referral Order. This will be the main sentencing option available to the Youth Court for those young people pleading guilty to their first offence(s) before the Court, unless the Court views the offences as meriting an absolute discharge, a hospital order or a custodial sentence. It is the remaining element of the Governments reforms to the youth justice system and is due for implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002.

1.2 The Order having been made by the Court, the matter will then be referred to a Youth Offender Panel. This Panel will consist of 2 trained volunteers enlisted from the local community, a member of the YOT staff with the young person/carer(s) and victim(s) of the offence also in attendance

wherever possible. The Panel will be chaired by one of the trained volunteers (Community Panel Members). The Panel's purpose is to examine the young person's offending behaviour with his family and then to draw up a programme of activities aimed at tackling the offending behaviour and preventing re-offending. It also provides a constructive forum in which to take account of the victims views in developing the reparative element of any programme which is seen to be a crucial part of reducing the likelihood of offending and ensuring victims have an increasing sense that their views are heard.

- 1.3 Throughout the Order information will need to be recorded in relation to clients, volunteers and services. Given that we are likely to be dealing with 250-300 Orders per year leading to 750-1000 Panel meetings taking place at 10-15 venues across the Wirral, we will need a well organised and maintained administrative system to ensure all is managed appropriately. The Youth Justice Board has provided an appropriate database which the YOT is acquiring.
- 1.4 In order to ensure the swift and effective administration of the Referral Order process, a robust and highly skilled administrative manager will be required to facilitate Youth Offender Panel meetings, co-ordinate volunteers and venue usage and manage the financial implications of the process.
- 1.5 Substance Misuse Service – Research has indicated growing links between the misuse of drugs and alcohol by young people and their involvement in crime. Evidence suggests that young people who offend have higher rates of drug misuse in comparison with the general population, eg a survey of young people on Supervision Orders reported that 70% had taken some form of illegal substance and a review of young people serving custodial sentence found that almost two thirds of young male prisoners had admitted to misusing drugs at some time. Such is the concern around drug and alcohol misuse and its link to youth crime that the Youth Justice Board is providing discrete funding to the YOT (£25,000 for 2001/02 and £60,000 for 2002-02) to address the issues related to substance misuse and youth crime. This money can only be spent on drugs services to young people.
- 1.6 It is the intention of Wirral YOT to contribute to the newly forming Wirral Young People's Substance Misuse Service. This team will operate on a multi agency basis and will operate with an "assertive outreach" approach, ie young people will be followed up rigorously to ensure they are assisted in their efforts to desist from alcohol/drug misuse. This team will offer a dedicated and co-ordinated early intervention service.
- 1.7 In order to effectively contribute to this emerging new service and ensure that YOT clients receive a fully comprehensive, resilient range of services designed to reduce their drug/alcohol use and involvement in offending two new Substance Misuse Worker posts will now be required.

## **2 Development of Restorative Justice Services**

- 2.1 Since the implementation of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act restorative justice approaches have been placed far more at the heart of the youth

justice system. Such approaches include direct victim/offender mediation, restorative conferencing, indirect reparation, community “payback” (or reparation) and they are very much central to the latest developments in the youth justice system, ie the Referral Order and the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme.

- 2.2 During 2000 and 2001, the development of these approaches has required significant development to ensure the full range of restorative justice processes are available across the whole range of YOT interactions. Indeed one of the 13 performance targets by which YOT will be measured instituted by the Youth Justice Board is to ensure restorative justice opportunities (both direct and indirect) are available for reparation and other orders and that these are used in 80% of supervised disposals.
- 2.3 In order to ensure this effective implementation of restorative justice approaches it has been necessary to increasingly use the existing post of Social Services Support Worker to play a major part in facilitating these developments as well as undertaking the existing duties of the current post.
- 2.4 Such has been the significant change in the focus of this post and the continuing need for the post to be involved in the necessary development of all restorative justice responses, it is requested that the existing Support Worker post to be redesignated to YOT worker grade to PO1 (SCP 33-36) £22,341-£24,072.
- 2.5 Given all the aforementioned service developments the span of control of the YOT Manager has significantly increased. The post is currently vacant and the Youth Justice Management Board will now recruit to the vacancy. The post has been reviewed and needs to be graded EPO6 £35,217-£37,239 to reflect these changes and ensure a high calibre appointment is made from a very competitive market. The revised grade will bring parity with other similar large Metropolitan Youth Offending Teams.

### **3 Financial and Staffing Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial Implications**

Cabinet will be aware of the requirement to shift £150k of Social Services investment in the YOT to other partner agencies to correct an imbalance in the present funding arrangements. It is imperative however, that the overall level of investment is protected as any reduction in funding will be matched by a reduction in the Youth Justice Board Grant

- 3.1.1 The financial implications arising from this report equates to £101,597 as follows and is detailed below:

	£
Admin Post – Referral Orders	27,735
Substance Misuse Workers	60,832
Social Worker Post Regrade	8,319
YOT Manager Regrade	<u>4,711</u>
Total	<u>101,597</u>

3.1.2 Funding is available from the Youth Justice board as follows:

	£
	2002-2003
Referral Orders	57,000
Substance Misuse	60,000
Extra Funds	<u>102,000</u>
Total Funds	<u>219,000</u>

### 3.2 Staffing Implications

3.2.1 The implementation of the developments taking place in the Wirral Youth Offending Team has significant staffing implications as highlighted in this report.

3.2.2 It is therefore proposed that members consider establishing new posts and regrade existing posts as follows:

- One Administration Manager (YOT) Scale 6 (point 26-28; £17,823 - £19,014) to organise, develop and manage the administration of the Referral Orders.
- Two Substance Misuse Workers (YOT) PO1 (Scale 33-36; £22,341 - £24,072) to develop drug and alcohol misuse services to YOT clients.
- Realign existing Social Services Support Worker post Res C Bar A/B (Scale 22-25 £15,741 - £17,265 to PO1 (Scale 33-36 £22,341 - £24,072).
- Realign existing YOT Manager Post PO14 (Scale 46-49 £31,254 - £33,384) to EPO6 (£35,217 - £37,239).

## 4 **Equal Opportunities Implications**

YOT activity should enhance the job prospects for young offenders who are typically disadvantaged in the jobmarket and suffer social exclusion as a result.

## 5 **Human Rights Implications**

None arising directly from this report.

## 6 **Local Agenda 21 Implications**

Crime prevention is a key area for the improvement of quality of life issues for Wirral residents.

## 7 **Community Safety Implications**

YOT activity and outcomes continue to reinforce and strengthen the Crime and Disorder Partnership's ability to tackle youth crime.

## **8 Planning Implications**

None arising directly from this report.

## **9 Local Member Support Implications**

Disaffected young people live in all Wards of the borough and commit crime in all Wards of the Borough. Wards that suffer from higher rates of social exclusion and crime will benefit more from successful youth justice activity.

## **10 Background Papers**

The background papers used in this report are:

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999

Referral Order Database – Home Office and Youth Justice Board, July 2001

Just Briefs – A Briefing Paper from the Youth Justice Trust

Cabinet Report, 12 July 2001 – New Developments in the YOT Service

New Allocation Formula for Funding YOT's and Grant Allocations for 2002/03, 22 January 2002

## **11 Recommendations**

11.1 That Members approve the creation of 3 new posts

- Administrative Manager (YOT) Scale 6 (Points 26-28) £15,823-£19,014
- 2 x Substance Misuse Workers (YOT) PO1 (SCP 33-36) £22,341-£24,072

11.2 That Members approve the changes to the following posts:

- YOT Manager, from PO14 (SPC 46-49) £31,254-£33,384 to EPO6 £35,217-£37,239
- Redesignate Social Services Support Worker to YOT Worker PO1 (SCP 33-36) £22,341-£24,072

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