

**From:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People Education

**To:** Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee - 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**Subject:** Early Help and Preventative Services – Youth Deep Dive

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Key Decision:** None

**Past Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Future Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:**

Kent County Council (KCC) is committed to ensuring that there is a wide range of service provision for young people across the county and KCC works closely with colleagues and partners in each of the 12 districts to ensure that this offer is delivered.

This report sets out the total KCC funded youth offer of £3.988 million and how this is utilised to meet the needs of young people in Kent. The funded offer consists of two key elements:

- An internally operated targeted youth provision, with a total budget of £2.812m
- A commissioned, externally provided, open access youth provision with a total budget of £1.176m

The total budget for youth work provision in 2018/19 is £3.988million

In September 2017, a report to CYPE Cabinet Committee discussed the commissioned provision, at which point the Cabinet Committee were advised that in all but two of the districts the commissioned offer providers were subject to an improvement plan. Members will note from the body of the report that significant improvements have been made in this regard.

This report provides the update requested by Members and sets out the performance, management and oversight of both the internal and commissioned elements of the offer. This consists of observations, audits and a focussed deep-dive as well as the actions taken to address and rectify underperformance in the commissioned offer including contract monitoring and partnership working.

To fully understand the complexity of the delivery it has been essential for this report to present the work of the commissioned providers within the context of the wider youth service offer.

**Recommendation:**

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the performance of the youth offer within the Early Help and Preventative Services.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Youth Services in Kent provide a rich mix of positive activity, support and advice for all young people through open access Hubs in every district/borough, alongside targeted additional support for young people who require individual interventions.
- 1.2. There is no statutory framework for youth provision, however Kent has maintained a robust funded offer of support which has been developed over a number of years to meet the needs of young people in Kent. The KCC offer has two main elements:
  - i. An in-house, targeted youth offer: Each district has a KCC-run youth hub, from which the internal offer is based. A full breakdown of the services delivered from these youth hubs and other settings e.g. street-based and in schools can be found in Appendices 1-12.

Whilst offering some universal open access sessions for all young people, the in-house offer is primarily focused on targeted work with young people who have additional needs.

- ii. An externally provided, open access commissioned youth offer: In December 2016, in line with our role as a commissioning authority and as part of a drive to rationalise and improve the commissioned offer from Early Help, twelve district-based youth contracts were let across the county to a total of nine providers (see Fig 1 for full breakdown). This followed a decision to proceed with this model, agreed at the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
- 1.3. In the three years leading up to December 2016, the external offer had been shared across 46 separate contracts. The commissioning model which led to the decision to have 46 providers was presented to Cabinet in July 2011, following on from the 'Kent Youth Service: Service Transformation report', which received support at Cabinet Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Consultation on the then new model took place between 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011 and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2011 and involved staff, services users, partners and stakeholders. The Service Transformation Proposal was followed by a key decision which was made on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012 by Cllr Mike Hill the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities.
- 1.4. Following the restructure of Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) - which took effect from March 2015 - the co-ordination of a youth offer in each district/borough within EHPS became the responsibility of the Youth Hub Delivery Manager, who reports directly to the respective, EHPS District Manager.
- 1.5. The National Children's Commissioners Office published a report on Local Authority funding in July 2018, in which it noted that nationally, preventative services have seen a 60% reduction in funding over the past 8-years. The report also highlighted that in many areas this had had a significant impact on the delivery of youth service provision.
- 1.6. Members in Kent have continued to support the delivery of universal and targeted youth provision with a total budget of £3.989m allocated across the county based on a number of static and variable service delivery factors, including:
  - i. Demographic need
  - ii. Rationalisation of the supply base
  - iii. The need to develop a more efficient and robust way of managing contracts
  - iv. The need to strengthen delivery of hard outcomes and improve accountability
  - v. The need to increase efficiency of process and performance monitoring

- vi. The opportunity to realign services to the most vulnerable areas
- vii. Enhancing the opportunities for collaboration between VCS organisations
- viii. Achieving the deadline of having new services in place by April 2016 in line with budget allocation.

1.7. Further to the Children’s Commissioners office report, work undertaken by KCC commissioners shows that two of Kent’s closest geographical and comparable statistical neighbours, Essex and East Sussex have not been able to retain an offer which is comparable with Kent’s overall £3.989m. East Sussex has a total youth spend of £390k per annum, which includes buildings, vehicles, face to face workers and management. In 2016/17 Essex County Council, had a budget of 2.4million for youth services, however, when asked they were not able to show a breakdown of resource allocated to youth provision for the current financial year.

1.8. The breakdown of the financial envelope across Kent can be seen in Figure 1, below. The providers in Ashford\*, Tonbridge and Malling\* and Tunbridge Wells\* only started delivering the contracts in August 2018, following a re-procurement exercise.

**Figure 1.**

| Financial Envelope for Kent County Council Funded Youth Provision |                    |                                  |                    |                    |
|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| District  | Internal Costings  | Externally Commissioned Provider | Commissioned Spend | Total              |
| Ashford   | £ 229,800          | The Canterbury Academy*          | £ 96,000           | £ 325,800          |
| Canterbury  | £ 219,200          | The Canterbury Academy           | £ 109,331          | £ 328,531          |
| Dartford  | £ 227,600          | PlayPlace                        | £ 87,990           | £ 315,590          |
| Dover   | £ 224,900          | Pie Factory Music                | £ 99,980           | £ 324,880          |
| Folkestone and Hythe  | £ 235,400          | Salus                            | £ 86,700           | £ 322,100          |
| Gravesham   | £ 213,900          | The Grand                        | £ 100,000          | £ 313,900          |
| Maidstone   | £ 206,100          | Salus                            | £ 91,700           | £ 297,800          |
| Sevenoaks   | £ 213,400          | West Kent Extra                  | £ 75,000           | £ 288,400          |
| Swale   | £ 187,100          | Optivio                          | £ 133,950          | £ 321,050          |
| Thanet  | £ 245,200          | Pie Factory Music                | £ 136,948          | £ 382,148          |
| Tonbridge and Malling   | £ 292,800          | Salus*                           | £ 83,000           | £ 375,800          |
| Tunbridge Wells   | £ 317,200          | Salus*                           | £ 76,000           | £ 393,200          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>£ 2,812,600</b> |                                  | <b>£ 1,176,599</b> | <b>£ 3,989,199</b> |

## 2. Performance

2.1. The district youth offer continues to enjoy regular input and Member oversight from each of the District Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs), where performance is reviewed.

- 2.2. Additionally, the performance of the commissioned contracts is overseen through contract monitoring meetings, improvement plans, deep dives and scrutiny of progress against Key Performance Indicators. The Key Performance Indicators for the commissioned youth contracts can be seen in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.**

| Key Performance Indicators |   | Current Performance Level               | Stretch | Green | Amber             | Red           | Frequency | Priority |
|----------------------------|---|---|---------|-------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|----------|
| 1                          | Registered – 10% of the District 8 - 19 age population (and up to the age of 24 for those with learning difficulties and/or additional needs) of children and young people have registered with the commissioned service.         | Current data is extractable from eStart | 90%     | 80%   | Between 60% - 79% | Less than 60% | Monthly   | High     |
| 2                          | Reach – 65% of children and young people reached against those registered with the commissioned service. 30% of children and young people that have been reached attend more than 4 occasions during each year (regular attendee) | Current data is extractable from eStart | 80%     | 70%   | Between 61% - 69% | Less than 60% | Monthly   | Medium   |
| 3                          | Number of sessions attended - % of sessions delivered against the bid submission.   | Current data is extractable from eStart | 90%     | 80%   | Between 60% - 79% | Less than 60% | Monthly   | Medium   |

### 3. Current Position

- 2.1. At CYPE Cabinet Committee in September 2017, Members were advised that in all but two of the districts, the commissioned youth provision was not performing at the expected level and was, therefore, subject to a performance improvement plan.
- 2.2. Following those discussions Members asked for a detailed update report on youth provision to include progress against the contract, performance against agreed KPI's and KCC oversight and improvement processes.
- 2.3. In the intervening period a number of significant events designed to improve all areas of the service have taken place, these include regular staff supervision to monitor performance, open access improvement reviews, robust contract management, evaluated observation sessions, individual district deep-dives and performance management processes leading to a re-procurement exercise.
- 2.4. Some commissioned providers advised EHPS that they had faced challenges in delivering the contract although most agreed to work with the commissioning team and EHPS staff to reach the required levels of performance improvement (see Appendix's 1, 11 and 12 for detail of activities undertaken).
- 2.5. The performance improvement plans for the commissioned services outlined steps that providers needed to take to increase registration and reach figures and improve the quality of the service being delivered. Appendix 14 provides an example of an improvement plan.
- 2.6. Since September 2017, Commissioners have worked consistently with providers and the Youth Hub Delivery Managers, to ensure that the plans in place were able to drive performance improvement. Performance against the plans was reviewed and updated every four weeks to monitor progress and as a result of this focused work, eight of the twelve districts reached the required level.

- 2.7. One district is still part of an (improving), improvement plan however in relation to the three districts where improvements were not delivered (Ashford, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells), contract warnings were issued to the providers. Following a period of negotiation, during February and April 2018, KCC and the providers agreed to end these contracts with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018. Individual briefings and written briefing notes regarding the contract terminations were given to Councillors within these three districts and updates were included in the EHPS Commissioned Services Performance Update to CYPE Cabinet Committee in May 2018.
- 2.8. One of the key risks identified in ending the existing contracts was the potential for a lack of provision during the Summer 2018 school holiday. To mitigate against both the likelihood and the impact of a break in provision, commissioners utilised s.32.2.C of the Public Contract Regulations. This allowed commissioners to work to very tight deadlines to procure contracts with existing, providers – who were able to evidence good performance – ensuring a seamless transition between the previous and new providers.
- 2.9. In May 2018, expressions of interest were sought from suitably experienced contractors who were performing well in their existing youth contracts. Following an intensive evaluation process, the three contracts were awarded to two providers. The contracts have been issued and providers began delivering against these new arrangements on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018.
- 2.10. As part of the procurement exercise a good level of summer provision was key to the award. Each of the providers have put in place and delivered against the suggested summer programmes and mobilisation plans. Providers have also undertaken work to ensure that their offer compliments that of the whole district and has included work with partners both internal and external to KCC to ensure a rounded offer is in place moving forwards.
- 2.11. Although the new provision is in place in the three districts, due to the recent mobilisation, we have not yet been able to formally evaluate provision. However, through regular mobilisation meetings and reviews, Commissioners are confident that the hard work put in by both providers to ensure a rapid mobilisation across the three districts will come to fruition. Both providers have demonstrated good performance in their existing youth contracts' and their continued commitment to a high level of delivery has been evident in their plans.
- 2.12. Existing contract monitoring practice is aimed at measuring outputs. However, in line with the work of the Strategic Commissioning Service from September 2018, a new approach to contract monitoring will be introduced. The new approach will continue to monitor performance against safeguarding practice, KPIs, risks and added value and will include a greater focus on quality of service delivery.
- 2.13. Contract monitoring meetings will now show increased focus on specific areas of delivery, such as session planning or outcomes, which take into account the journey of specific young people. This heightened focus on quality of service has been welcomed by both internal and commissioned services, who agree that developing a consistent and high standard of quality across the youth offer should be a priority for all and will have the greatest impact on young people.
- 2.14. Further to the contract monitoring work and in line with the agreement at Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee in September 2016, each district has

been subject to an annual deep dive. The aim of this process is to assess contract compliance and the overall quality of the service being delivered.

- 2.15. Each of the EHPS contracts are subject to an annual deep dive that evaluates progress and identifies areas for development. The deep dive process also provides an opportunity for KCC staff and providers to consider any lessons learnt locally and nationally and inform the delivery of the rest of the contract.
- 2.16. The deep dives took place over a three-day period and consisted of:
  - Desk based activity to gain assurance of due diligence relating to policies, procedures, financials and insurances.
  - Field based quality assurance of service provision, including how learning is being taken forward from observations of the service, analysis of both accredited and non-accredited outcomes and the understanding of the service scope by staff members delivering the service (including 1:1 interviews).
  - Understanding user views and reviewing how service providers are capturing and utilising the voice of the child for service development.
  - Developing and sharing a final report which is then shared with the provider at a plenary meeting. Findings, strengths and areas for development and actions are then discussed and agreed.
- 2.17. Deep dives were not undertaken for the providers who had served notice on their contracts. This was due to existing improvement plans being in place, resulting in the development of exit strategies.
- 2.18. KCC internal youth provision is also regularly reviewed and this work has produced district information packs, which include: a detailed overview of the internal and commissioned provision; partnership working within the district; analysis from the deep dives; a 'smartie' map showing the locations of youth provision; Summer Programme 2018; and a new process of open access improvement reviews.
- 2.19. A Kent summary of Youth Work Observations and the grading criteria used can be found in Appendix 15a and 15b. These observations are undertaken, within KCC internal provision, to directly observe one to one work and:
  - Reveal practice-based issues that are not currently being picked up through the audit programme
  - Provide opportunity for practitioners to reflect and consider their practice skills following an observation in order to inform future development
  - Obtain a view on how engagement strategies, skills and knowledge are working for the families by getting direct feedback
- 2.20. Member led Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs) continue to have regular oversight of partnership working, performance against KPIs, the voice of the child, targeting resource and the impact of service delivery on the wider community.
- 2.21. The deep-dive evaluations and feedback from officers has identified a number of overarching themes in service delivery:
  - There is a strong focus on education, employment and training.

- Co-production and feedback from young people is being well facilitated across a range of different district wide forums.
- Detached (street-based) youth work is generally delivered as part of the commissioned offer.
- Identified vulnerable groups are frequently targeted to address
  - i. Adolescent risk and/or traumatic experiences
  - ii. Anti-social behaviour
  - iii. Substance misuse
  - iv. Domestic violence and positive relationships.
  - v. Children with special educational needs
  - vi. LGBT
  - vii. Transitions
- Where high levels of need are identified, targeted work is undertaken.
- Sports and health are included in the regular programmes, including during summer holidays.
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health is becoming a key focus for session planning.
- Life skills, focussing on topics such as cooking, money management and personal hygiene.

2.22. The performance of internal youth provision is monitored through the EHPS Improvement Team, within Information and Intelligence. The EHPS Scorecard monitors reach and registration figures and quality is assessed through youth work observations and open access performance reviews.

2.23. National Youth Work Week is being held from 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018. KCC's Youth Participation Teams will be linking in with the Youth Hubs to plan Kent's involvement in the event. More information on last year's event and ideas for getting involved can be found here: <https://nya.org.uk/supporting-youth-work/youth-work-week/>

### 3. Internal Audit

- 3.1. In May 2018, Members requested that KCC Internal Audit investigate the process and journey in the 'awarding' of the current commissioned youth contracts. The Governance and Audit Committee agreed to the inclusion in the 2018/19 Audit Plan of the Priority 2 audit, "Youth Justice/Adolescent Services".
- 3.2. As a result of the discussions during the Governance and Audit Committee's meeting on 24 April 2018, Members requested that a review of the youth services contracts be increased to Priority 1. The Committee agreed the request.
- 3.3. In November 2016, the Council let 12 lots of youth services contracts to 9 providers. Each lot covered the provision of commissioned youth services across one of the 12 districts in Kent. The duration of the contracts was five years and the price for all 12 lots was £5.883 million (£1.177 million per annum), which was under the £6 million target.

- 3.4. This was the second time that the Council had commissioned youth services, but it changed the commissioning model from provision of individual services to district-wide provision. The Council also imposed a performance management system that it enforced.
- 3.5. During the first year of the contract, 7 of the 9 providers were required to implement improvement plans. Two providers, Sk8side and West Kent YMCA, did not meet the required level of improvement and the Council issued formal warnings. Both providers decided to exit their respective contracts and were replaced in August 2018.
- 3.6. Internal Audit considered the rationale for the award of the current contracts, the journey to that decision and the scrutiny of the decision-making process. The audit focussed on:
  - i. The Council's contract management arrangements
  - ii. The effectiveness of the Council's contract management structure and resources
  - iii. The commissioning services' response to poor performance
  - iv. Relationship management with key stakeholders
  - v. Development of the contracted services
  - vi. How the Council applies lessons learnt to inform future improvements
- 3.7. The internal audit process has now been completed and the report published in draft. The report has not completed its internal governance processes so is in draft, but the audit found that "Following independent testing and analysis, auditors concluded that the contract management arrangements are satisfactory. Contract monitoring is supported by the active engagement of the senior commissioning manager across all 12 districts and the consistent application of the performance management regime".
- 3.8. Auditors found that "the contract management team has effectively implemented important changes to the contracts, including major changes to improve the performance management regime. KCC's teams have observed and monitored providers' improvements and encouraged them to share best practice".

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1. The delivery of a robust, integrated, high quality Youth offer, remains a key priority for Early Help and Preventative Services within the new Integrated Children's Services Division.
- 4.2. The first year of the new contract cycle has seen an overall improvement in the performance of the commissioned services offer, significant improvements in the oversight and scrutiny of contract monitoring, improvements in the level of scrutiny and assurance across the internal offer as well as continuing improvements across the internal provision.
- 4.3. Continuous improvement across both delivery and the quality of provision will remain at the centre of all contract and performance management discussions and meetings for both the internal and external element of the wider offer.
- 4.4. Deep dives are to remain part of the Early Help Commissioned Services performance management process, including Youth Services monitoring arrangements, to provide on-going assurance to partners regarding the provision and the ability to incorporate quality into the monitoring of contracts.

- 4.5. KCC will continue to contract monitor all providers, to ensure good quality services that are delivered in a timely manner meet the needs of Kent's children and young people.

## 5. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Ashford District Youth Information Pack
- Appendix 2 – Canterbury District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 3 – Dartford District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 4 – Dover District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 5 – Folkestone and Hythe District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 6 – Gravesham District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 7 – Maidstone District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 8 – Swale District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 9 – Sevenoaks District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 10 – Thanet District Youth Information Pack\*
- Appendix 11 – Tonbridge and Malling District Youth Information Pack
- Appendix 12 – Tunbridge Wells District Youth Information Pack
- Appendix 13 – HeadStart Summer Programme
- Appendix 14 – Example Improvement Plan
- Appendix 15a – Youth Work Observation Tracker
- Appendix 15b – Youth Work Observation Grading Criteria

\*Restricted: Commissioned Service Deep Dive Report contains company sensitive information

### **Recommendation:**

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the performance, scrutiny and oversight of the Youth offer within the Early Help and Preventative Services.

Report Author: Helen Cook  
Job title: Senior Commissioner – Children (Early Help and Preventative Services)  
Telephone number: 03000 415975  
Email address: [helen.cook@kent.gov.uk](mailto:helen.cook@kent.gov.uk)

Relevant Director: Stuart Collins  
Job title: Director of Integrated Children's Services  
Telephone number: 03000 410519  
Email address: [Stuart.collins@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Stuart.collins@kent.gov.uk)