



Midlothian
A great place to grow

Whole system approach, Youth Justice Strategy and Action Plan

2020 -2022

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Welcome

Welcome to Midlothian Council Youth Justice Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2022.

This plan sets out the path Midlothian Council will take over the next two years to reduce youth offending and improve outcomes for children and young people who are involved in offending behaviours.

We know that there can be a variety of reasons that children and young people become involved in offending behaviour and in Midlothian we work hard to intervene as early as possible to identify the problem and seek positive solutions via multi agency collaboration.

This strategy and action plan not only evidences the work currently taking place in Midlothian it also fully embeds the Scottish Government's current priority themes. This strategy and action plan has been developed to ensure that it is flexible and can embrace the new Scottish Government vision once it has been published.

The early intervention and collaborative person centred approach to youth justice in Midlothian is proving to be successful, in the last year alone we have seen the rate of young people charged with a crime decreasing.

This strategy and action plan aims to support children and young people who live in our community to reduce offending whilst providing creative supports and resources to ensure that they have the tools they need to succeed to become responsible and active citizens.

***Joan Tranent* - Chief Officer Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities**

Introduction

The Scottish Government have identified three priority themes for 2015 to 2020;

Advancing the whole system approach

Improving life chances

Developing Capacity and Improvement

These priority themes can be achieved provided there is good quality partnership working, co- production and asset-based approaches which are created around the child or young person.

Midlothian Council is committed to this ethos and will demonstrate throughout this strategy how these key areas will be developed.

Specifically this strategy aims to show how Midlothian Council will advance the whole system approach.

The Whole System Approach

The Whole System Approach (WSA) is based on evidence which shows that the long term outcomes for young people involved in offending behaviour could be improved by diverting them away from statutory measures, prosecution and custody. Instead, work should take place to implement early intervention and robust community alternatives. The six elements to the WSA are described below and form the basis of the work already established and currently being implemented within Midlothian Council.

Integrated processes and services across child and adult services streamlined and consistent planning, assessment and decision making processes for young people who offend, ensuring they receive the right help at the right time;

Effective ways of working with high risk young people involved in offending

Diversion of young people from statutory measures, prosecution and custody

Increased opportunities for community alternatives to secure care and custodial sentences

Consistent approach to risk assessment and risk management

Better support for young people attending court

Improved services for young people in custody and reintegrating into the community

Taking into account all of the above information including feedback from meetings, internal policy, procedure and process and guidance from the Scottish Government, Midlothian are focusing on the priority themes illustrated via our Youth Justice Strategy action plan.

Where we are now?

Partnership working is currently taking place via a number of forums throughout Midlothian such as; Youth Offending Management Meetings, Wellbeing meetings within all High Schools, Midlothian Community Safety and Justice Partnership Working Group, Escalating Harm group and GIRFEMC vulnerable sub group. The following update evidences the work ongoing in Midlothian at the current time. Further on in the strategy our future plans will be illustrated.

Whole System Funding: The Scottish Government have asked each local authority to ensure Youth Justice is considered within strategic planning. To have more cross over with services providing Youth Justice and Justice (previously Criminal Justice) and for developments in these areas to be sustainable, Midlothian Council have chosen to direct some funding to specific targeted projects of work to reduce youth offending which is typically identified early in communities and in high schools. Robust links have also been made with The Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice to support a new learning and development pathway for all staff directly supporting children, young people and their families (See action plan for more information).

Youth Offending Management Meetings: take place in Midlothian once a month. Each meeting is attended by multiple agencies who offer updates for their area, which include;

Secure care update – Children and Families Social Work

Youth offending update – Police Scotland

Update on Missing persons – Police Scotland

Update from Life Long Learning and Employability

Update on community anti-social behaviour – Community police sergeants

Update from Scottish Fire and Rescue

Update from Community Justice

Update from Adult Criminal Justice

Update from Education

These meetings are held regularly and a minute is kept of each one. These meetings help to provide a consistent response to youth offending and ensure that children and young people have access to the supports available to them in Midlothian when they need them.

Update on Well-being meetings: Midlothian Council delivers its priorities through the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and the Single Midlothian Plan (SMP). Currently the priorities are reducing the gap in learning outcomes, reducing the gap in health outcomes and reducing the gap in economic circumstances. In order to support these priorities the Early Intervention and Prevention Development worker attends well-being meetings in all six high schools. The aim of well-being meetings is to consider ways to support our young people to attend school, reach positive destinations agree additional supports where there are concerns or blocks to learning and discuss youth offending issues. A recent audit of wellbeing showed that over the last school term the two main reasons for referral discussion related to attendance issues and behavioural issues. These meetings are also used to discuss suitable disposals for young people who have been raised at Youth Offending Management meetings to ensure the response is collaborative and responsive.

- The Early Intervention and Prevention Development officer attends the **Midlothian Community Justice Partnership Working Group**. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 places a statutory responsibility on local authorities to coordinate a partnership response in reducing (re)offending. Statutory partners including Police Scotland, Scottish Prison Service, NHS Lothian, work alongside non-statutory partners and third sector organisations. There is currently a three year (2020-23) Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan that outlines the partnership's priorities, actions and initiatives. In addition several actions from the Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan are reflected in this action plan. Including information obtained from the community consultation exercise on the strategic assessment of local need.
- The Early Intervention and Prevention Development Officer attends the **Whole System Approach lead staff meeting at the Scottish Government and Early Intervention Forums run by the Centre for youth and criminal justice**. The purpose of these meetings is for Scottish Government improvement leads to share statistics and for all local authorities across Scotland to share areas of positive practice. This information will help to inform and shape Midlothian Council Youth Justice Strategy moving forward.

Where are we going?

Advancing whole system approach is an action on the Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan - the aim being to raise the importance of Whole System Approach and strengthen collaborative working.

The Scottish Government have invested funding to reinvigorate Whole System Approach with key aims to;

Ensure that youth justice is reflected as a priority in Children's Services Plans, Community Justice Plans and other related strategic planning arrangements. This renewal effort will encourage more confident and regular collaboration, strengthening links between youth justice, community justice, education, third sector and children's services.

In turn, this will benefit children and young people involved in and at risk of offending (and communities) by helping ensure a person-centred approach which improves support for children and young people and delivers better key transitions.

Should local authorities and partners conclude that they are placed to, then they may also allow extension of WSA in some areas to support young people up to the age of 21 or 26 for those who are care experienced.

In Midlothian we have already invested some of our funding to support the work of The Y2K/180 project which offers individual and group supports with an aim to explore and challenge the causes and consequences of risk taking and offending behaviours through informative, participative and person-centred methods. Young people involved have all taken part in activities that explore key themes such as victim empathy, personal safety, moral choices, fire safety and knife crime. All participants are encouraged to work towards accredited Dynamic youth award.

We have also invested funding to Artlink Edinburgh and Lothians who are a unique creative charitable organisation working across education, health and social care in Midlothian. Who use cultural activity as a tool to advance involvement in the arts and wider - working collaboratively with young people to identify their own unique interests.

In Midlothian our drive is to build on existing structures in place to identify concerns as early as possible to ensure that swift action can be taken to minimise risk and re occurrence.

In addition to the work on going please see our **action plan** of future pieces of work

Priority	Action Ref	Action	Due Date	Lead	Indicator	Baseline	Target
Children and Young People involved in offending will receive timely and effective interventions	1	Develop the current Youth Offending Management Meetings to incorporate feedback from children, young people and their parents and carers	Aug 21	Claire Brookes	Consultation undertaken and recommendations presented (including ways in which to capture feedback from children, young people, their parents and carers)	n/a	Review published
	2	Continue the delivery of START:AV Training throughout Midlothian in conjunction with Children and Young People Criminal Justice (CYCJ)	Dec 21	Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice	Percentage of Midlothian Children and Families staff who completed training	12	24
	3	Improve links with HMI Polmont Young Offenders institution Through Care After Care re transition and rehabilitation planning	Mar 21	Children and Families Social Work 12+ team	Percentage of young people supported via the TCAC team at Polmont who have a plan in place with includes identification of supports required on release (e.g. family supports, financial supports including benefit information, housing and health)	??	xx%
	4	Revised Youth Offending Management meetings to continue to take place once a month in the multi-agency forum	Aug 21	EEL&P-DP Police Scotland	The number and % of young people being re-referred for discussion	19/20: tbc	Decrease
	5	Wellbeing meetings in schools are used as the forum for discussing disposals to education. Following youth offending discussions, identify how many young people are having effective disposals to education	Aug 21	EEL&P-DP, Police Scotland Youth Liaison Officer	Number of young people discussed because of youth offending, and of those how many were given and education disposal	19/20:99	Decrease
	6	Participate in a Partnership Project between Education and Community Justice (CJ) in Newbattle High School to rebrand the CJ logo, increasing awareness of CJ and support services available amount our younger communities (note Newbattle High School is a digital centre of excellence)	Jun 21	Community Justice	New logo designed and "launched" Feedback from pupils involved and completion of project	n/a (new project) n/a (new project)	Logo signed off by Community Safety and Justice Partnership Qualitative – positive feedback
	7	Working in conjunction with community justice, develop a programme of intervention utilising the CRIB (Community Reach and Inclusion Bus)	Dec 21	Community Justice	Design and plan a programme of intervention	n/a (new project)	Prevention programme developed

Priority	Action Ref	Action	Due Date	Lead	Indicator	Baseline	Target
	8	Maintain Vulnerable Young People Meetings as and when required, following the Vulnerable Person Protocol (VYP)	Mar 21	Multi-Agency Forum	Number of Vulnerable Young People Meetings held	19/20: tbc	Decrease
Young people whose offending is related to their drug and/or alcohol use	9	Continue to offer young people (ages 12-21) individual and tailored drug and alcohol support through MYPAS, with their knowledge and consent	Mar 21	MYPAS	Number of young people engaging with on-going support will reduce (or sustain) from substance use and related risk-taking	19/20: tbc	40
	10	Report non-engagement back to the Early Intervention and Prevention Development Officer at well-being meetings	Mar 21	Claire Brookes	Number of young people who refuse to engage	n/a (new action)	Decrease
	11	Develop a trauma informed service that focusses on tailored, structured intervention and access to wraparound services for young people on Community Payment Order supervision	Mar 23	Children and Families Social Work 12+ team	Consult, plan and design new holistic service	n/a (new project)	Service designed and implemented
Ensure welfare concerns are addressed in an attempt to prevent further offending behaviour	12	Continue to share Vulnerable Persons Database referral forms with relevant partners to ensure any welfare concerns are addressed and ascertain suitable interventions/diversions are provided in an attempt to prevent further offending behaviour	Mar 21	Police Scotland	The number of young people charged with a crime in Midlothian	2019/20 - 255 2018/19 - 359 2017/18 - 342 2016/17 - 350 2015/16 - 305 (5year average - 322)	Reduce by 10% on 5 year average = 290

Scottish Government Update

The Youth Justice Strategy *Preventing Offending: Getting it right for children and young people* was published on 15 June 2015. The Strategy promotes a child-centred, preventative approach and focused on three priority themes to be taken forward jointly with key partners over the 5 year period from 2015-2020.

In 2017 an update report was published, delivering the 2016-17 Programme for Government commitment: 'we will implement our refreshed youth justice strategy: 'Preventing Offending – Getting it Right for Children and Young People'. The progress report relating to the three priority themes detailed above, noted that, overall, progress had been sustained over those two years and that more broadly, over a ten year period, statistics had shown an 83% reduction in

children referred on offence grounds, a 64% reduction in 16 and 17 year olds in custody and a 78% reduction in the number of young people prosecuted in Scotland's courts. Further key areas of progress included; engagement with community based planning partners across Scotland to highlight the value of on-going commitment to a preventative approach to offending by young people; drawing on the voice and experiences of young people and using data and research to drive further improvement.

The current Strategy ended in June 2020. The Scottish Government Youth Justice team are now considering the future Youth Justice priorities and a proposed Vision and Action Plan for Youth Justice to be published soon.

The new vision is likely to include a 2 year rolling action plan to allow for greater flexibility and scope for change in response to changes in the context and emerging evidence. The new Vision and Action Plan will take on board;

- the Promises from the Care Review
- the findings from Claire Lightowler's Rights Respecting paper, published earlier this year
- The soon to be published Youth Justice Standards along with views from young people, stakeholders and partners.

Midlothian Council are committed to these changes too and have created a youth justice strategy which is flexible so that any new promises from the Scottish Government 'future' youth justice priorities can be re highlighted and created throughout the action plan.

This strategy was endorsed by the Getting it right for every Midlothian child board meeting on the 17th September 2020