

**Staffordshire Youth Offending Service
Youth Crime Prevention Strategy
2013 – 2016**

**“Helping Young People to change their lives to make
Staffordshire a safer place”**

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Background

Research shows that early intervention is central to preventing youth crime. The primary aim of the youth justice system is the prevention of offending (Crime and Disorder Act 1998). The most cost-effective way to reduce youth crime in Staffordshire is to prevent young people from getting into trouble in the first place. Preventing youth crime is conducive to reducing economic and social costs.

Staffordshire Youth Offending Service (SYOS) has a successful track record of reducing the number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System (YJS) and performance in this aspect of work continues to improve (Fig 1).

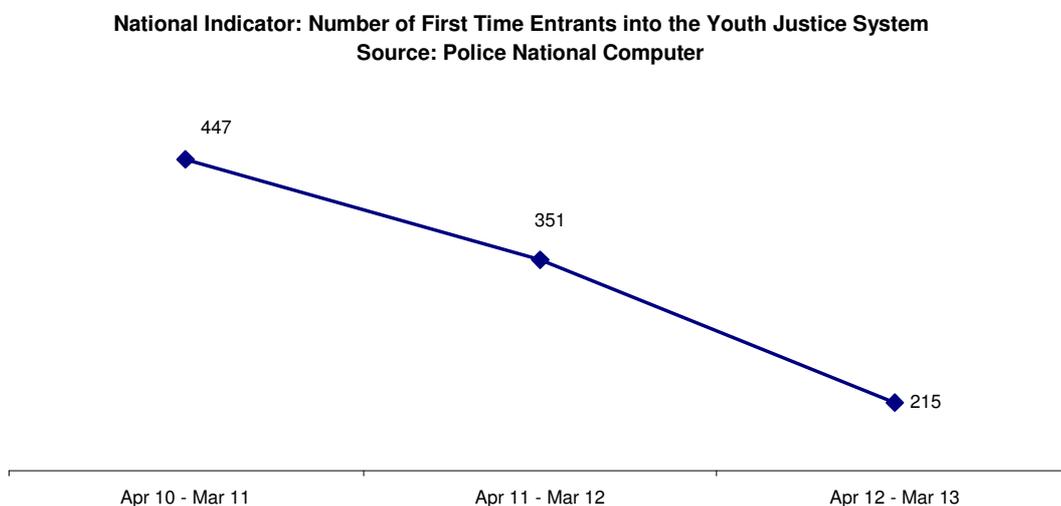


Fig 1

This Prevention Strategy aims to outline the key objectives and activities which SYOS believes will be the most effective means of reducing the level of youth crime and anti-social behaviour within Staffordshire. By identifying, assessing and addressing risk factors, we aim to provide support which meets individual needs, builds resilience in young people and reduces the number of victims in Staffordshire.

Whilst the majority of young people make a positive contribution to society, young people today grow up in an environment / culture with widespread negative perceptions of youth.

SYOS is committed to working with young people who are at risk of/committing crime or anti-social behaviour, to enable them to make a positive contribution to

society and reduce the negative impact upon their own lives and the lives of others.

Staffordshire Youth Crime Prevention Strategy

Youth Crime Prevention Workers (YCPW) are the cornerstone of effective delivery to young people at risk of anti-social behaviour/crime. May 2013 saw the welcome return of YCPW to SYOS.

This Youth Crime Prevention Strategy has been developed to embed effective youth crime initiatives in Staffordshire. Youth Crime Prevention staff will work with children and young people between the ages of 10-17 years. In Staffordshire children and young people in this age group make up 9.4% of the population.

It is recognised that structural factors may negatively impact on opportunities for young people. SYOS will continue to work effectively with young people to prevent the harm caused by youth crime in a challenging climate. SYOS will structure prevention activity in terms of support, dialogue, challenge and early intervention / consequences.



SYOS will work effectively to help prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour and change the thinking and behaviour of those young people who have offended. This is consistent and preventing young people from becoming victims of crime, improving levels of anti-social behaviour and protecting the public.

Developing the Strategy

SYOS is committed to enhancing community safety and providing interventions leading to positive outcomes for children and young people. The implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) coincides with the review of the Staffordshire Youth Crime Prevention Strategy and influences the direction of travel.

SYOS is a key member of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) partnership and the implementation of new out of court disposals, in partnership with Staffordshire Police and Health, reinforces speedy assessment/interventions and the “triple track” approach to working with young people who engage in anti-social behaviour /crime. SYOS has a clear strategy which directs the right level of intervention at the right time to reduce the number of young people entering the YJS.

Aims and Objectives of Staffordshire Youth Crime

Prevention Strategy:

Aims:

- Early identification, referral and assessment of children and young people between the ages of 10-17 who are identified being at risk of committing crime or anti-social behaviour.
- Prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Change the attitude and behaviour of those young people who have offended.
- Develop effective partnership working to build on the skills, resources and strengths of each agency.
- Reduce the number of young people becoming victims of crime.
- Improve perceptions of young people.
- Reinforce public confidence in the youth justice system.
- Public protection.

Objectives

- Reduce the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system and civil courts for anti-social behaviour.
- Improve the life chances of young people identified as being at high risk of offending or committing anti-social behaviour.
- Reduce the number of victims of youth crime and reports of anti-social behaviour within our communities.
- Improve public confidence in relation to interventions to address youth crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Improve outcomes for children and young people in Staffordshire.



Shared Objectives

This Youth Crime Prevention Strategy supports a number of shared objectives with wider agencies within Staffordshire, including:

- Targeted Services
- Looked After Children (LAC) Services
- Safeguarding Services
- Staffordshire Integrated Offender Management Programme (IOM)
- Building Resilient Families and Communities

Staffordshire Youth Offending Service Youth Crime Prevention Strategy Planned Activity

Support and Challenge:

- Increase the percentage of young people engaging with YCPW to divert them from entering the YJS.
- Ensure that referrals and YCPW are appropriate.
- Ensure that interventions address criminogenic need.
- Ensure that safeguarding principles are consistently applied.
- Ensure that parenting support is offered to those parents who would benefit from such intervention in line with existing resources within Local Support Teams (LSTs).
- Engage neighbourhood policing teams to ensure that relevant information informs decisions about 'hot spot areas'/levels of intervention.
- SYOS, LSTs and Staffordshire Police Service will continue to develop ways to engage effectively with young people affected by crime.
- Continue to consult young offenders on key youth/crime issues.

Early Intervention / Consequences:

- Work collaboratively with Staffordshire Police to make joint initial assessments to determine appropriate out of court disposals.
- Strengthen SYOS partnership approach by reintegrating YCPW into SYOS and reinforcing youth crime prevention within the IOM Strategy.
- Ensure that restorative justice underpins and is completed during all SYOS interventions.
- Ensure a consistent approach to early identification, assessment and targeted youth crime support across Staffordshire.
- Ensure that speedy health screening is undertaken following an admission of guilt by young people arrested.

- Ensure that YCPW work flexibly to address identified need.
- Launch the Staffordshire Protocol to Reduce the Prosecution of LAC and reduce the number of LAC who offend.
- Continue to work with agencies and young people to increase the number of young people in suitable full-time education, training or employment at the end of their SYOS interventions.

- Ensure that welfare / safeguarding needs are assessed and addressed.
- Deliver interventions to reduce substance misuse by young people.
- Engage in prevention activities within schools.



- Ensure that young people are aware of the potential consequences of not cooperating with prevention activities/out of court disposals.
- Ensure robust strategies following SYOS intervention to ensure that plans are in place to support children following out of court disposals/court.
- Embed a performance management framework to ensure that good quality interventions are delivered to young people and measure outcomes.
- Continue to monitor and implement emerging evidence of best practice from national agencies in youth crime prevention.
- Undertake mapping exercise to identify 'hot spot' areas within Staffordshire.

Community Impact Assessment

SYOS is committed to providing services that are fair and accessible. Anti-discriminatory practice is central to all aspects of implementation and delivery. A full Community Impact Assessment has been completed.

National / Local Drivers

National Drivers	Local Drivers
Crime and Disorder Act 1998	Staffordshire Youth Offending Service Plan
Police Crime Commissioners Plan	Staffordshire Youth Offending Service Self Assessment
Every Child Matters 2003	Staffordshire County Council Families First Strategy
Children Act 2004	Staffordshire Criminal Justice Board
Narrowing the Gap: the inspection of children's services	Staffordshire Integrated Offender Management Plan
Youth Crime Action Plan (2008)	Local Deter Young Offenders Strategy
Troubled Families Programme (2012)	Building Resilient Families and Communities
Aiming High for Young People	Local Joint LASPO Strategy (with Staffordshire Police & Stoke YOT)
Staying Safe Action Plan	Staffordshire Strategic Assessment of Vulnerable People
The Children's Plan – Brighter Futures	Staffordshire Protocol to Reduce the Prosecution of LAC
Towards a Youth Justice Board Prevention Strategy – YJB 2007	Staffordshire YOS Restorative Justice Policy
Youth Matters / Next Steps 2006	
Youth Justice Board Deter Young Offenders Scheme 2009	
Legal Aid Sentencing & Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) 2012	

Monitoring and Review of the Strategy

The multi-disciplinary Youth Diversion Steering Group will monitor progress against this Youth Crime Prevention Strategy. This group is chaired by the County Manager (Head of SYOS) who will report to the SYOS Management Board.

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Glossary

SYOS	Staffordshire Youth Offending Service
YJS	Youth Justice System
YCPW	Youth Crime Prevention Workers
LASPO	Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
LAC	Looked After Children
YOT	Youth Offending Team
LST	Local Support Team
LAC	Looked After Children
ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour Order