

Bolton Youth Justice Service

Participation

Strategy 2022/23

Bolton's Youth Justice Participation Strategy is an interim document pending the development of an authority wide Children & Young People's Participation Strategy.

We are committed to continually improving the quality of the service that is offered to young people, their parents/carers, victims, and the wider community. We will take into consideration the diverse needs of all service users by ensuring that their language, gender, race, religion, sexuality, and any disabilities are identified along with their individual circumstances. We believe that by listening to their unique experiences and involving them in the development of the service we can ensure that it best meets their needs.

Induction

Bolton YJS has devised an induction process for children/young people at the start of their disposal or order to ensure they are able to share their views and concerns, fully understand the expectations placed upon them and what they can expect from us.

Unless it is not appropriate to do so their initial contact should take place at their home with parent/carer present. The child/young person will be provided with our 1-minute factsheet about the YJS and leaflet relating to the specific disposal/order they are subject to. There are adapted versions of these which support those with additional needs. A two-way agreement between the YJS and YP/Parent, and will be discussed, agreed and signed by all.

In addition, we provide information about how to make a suggestion or complaint.

In subsequent sessions staff may use the following tools to get to know the child/young person and enable them to share their views and be involved in their supervision.

Just Tell Me – Card Game/activity to offer the YP the opportunity to access information from the worker and to establish an understanding of their role.

Love it – Hate it discussion/questionnaire - An activity to promote the start of worker and YP getting to know one another (generic/non emotive topics).

Up For It – Activity to offer the YP the opportunity to identify and agree acceptable topics for discussion in future sessions.

Ecomap Activity - can be considered for use to enable the young person to share who is important to them.

When we explain the process sufficiently, and in a way young people and families can understand, it adds legitimacy to the service. Evidence indicates that when a system of justice lacks legitimacy, the purpose of intervention and punishment is lost. At Bolton YJS we are committed to meaningful interventions with young people & their families/carers.

Self-Assessment

Each young person will be asked to complete a self-assessment as part of their Asset Plus or OOCN assessment. This will allow them to explain any concerns that they might have and identify anything they would like assistance with, as well as giving them the opportunity to tell us about their lives. This document will be reviewed regularly with the young person to ensure that the issues they have identified are being supported.

In addition, we will provide our optional Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire which can be completed by both YP and carer/parent with scoring guide and process in place for interpreting/using the data/consultation etc via YOT group email box.

Evidence indicates that it is easy to underestimate the importance of social inequalities in narrowing young people's options. Disadvantaged or marginalised young people are often excluded from mainstream society, yet they are surrounded by others who seem able to access its benefits. By completing the self-assessment, young people have the opportunity to tell us about their lives & acknowledge any disadvantages or adverse life experiences they may have had.

Plans and Reviews

On completion of their initial assessment all young people and their parents/carers will be involved in developing their intervention plan. This will focus on assisting them to avoid reoffending, be happy and healthy and build on the strengths in their lives. The young person and parent/carer are required to sign the plan and they will be given a copy.

Plans are reviewed on at least a three-monthly basis to acknowledge progress made and areas for future support. The young person and their parent/carer will be invited to meet with their Youth Justice Officer to share their views.

Where a young person is reviewed within the Multi Agency Risk Management process (MARMs) they and their parent/carer should be invited to these meetings wherever possible.

A final review meeting is completed when a young person concludes their involvement with our service. This will identify any additional support required and allows the young person and their parent/carer to feedback their views on the service they have experienced.

Young people have a right to express their opinions on decisions that affect them. They also have the right to contribute to an effective response to their own behaviour. Joint intervention planning with the young person and their families/carers will increase engagement and participation, in order to maximise the possibility of success.

Positive Feedback

Over the course of our involvement with young people and their families staff often receive positive feedback about their practice. This is sometimes in written form but more often is provided verbally either by the service users themselves or is passed via other professionals. The YJS aims to collate this feedback in order to reflect the positive impact our team has on the lives of others and to ensure that we identify and build upon our strengths.

End survey

Young people will be invited to complete a survey at the conclusion of their intervention, or prior to this if they do not successfully complete their disposal or order. We view it as vital to gain feedback from young people who may not have completed to explore possible barriers and whether they feel anymore could have been done to support their progress

The survey will ask questions about the young person and families' experience of the service and any suggestions for improvement. YJS Management Board Members are to be encouraged to participate in this process and meet with our young people and their families to gain feedback on their experience of our service. The survey findings will be collated, and any feedback will be sent to the Head of Service who will provide an overview at Management Board Meetings

In the future we plan to develop our feedback system and will scope out the potential use of an electronic / app-based system to gain feedback which could then be accessed and reviewed by board members. Our Management Board are keen to seek feedback from a wide range of service users both recently and historically and therefore a scoping exercise is to be completed with local University's to see if this could potentially form part of a research project. Learning points from such research would be used to help understand 'what works' or 'what more could be done' to enable desistance from offending for a partnership response across the management board.

Normally youth justice interventions focus on only the negative consequences of young people's offending. However, to truly understand and influence young people's decision-making processes, it is important to also consider the positive consequences of young people's offending. The end survey offers young people an opportunity to give honest feedback on their perceptions of the costs/benefits of offending and the impact of their involvement with the YJS.

Victims

Victim work in Bolton is provided by a commissioned service, Remedi. Remedi operate a comprehensive feedback process at the end of all their interventions with victims. Information from this is used by Remedi themselves for service development and feedback to the Lead Operational Manager and Head of Service as well as being included in the quarterly report that is presented to the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board.

Bolton's Participation and Engagement Team

Bolton Youth Justice Service are committed to working in partnership with the wider council's Participation & Engagement team to ensure the voice of children and young people is evident across Bolton to influence and encourage change in service delivery. Bolton's Participation and Engagement Team host and manage a Youth Voice vehicle that consists of many Youth Action Groups incorporating all children and young people including the most vulnerable young people in Bolton.

Children and young people are heavily involved in co-design and Take Over events across Bolton council and partners, this is very evident within the Corporate Parenting Board, Safeguarding Partnership, and the Bolton Vision Partnership.