

MERTON COUNCIL

The Merton Youth Justice Service



www.merton.gov.uk





Introduction

The Merton Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a partnership of different agencies, which aims to prevent and reduce youth offending. The YJS was set up in 2000 as a result of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Our partner agencies include the following:

- London Probation Trust
- Sutton & Merton Primary Care Trust
- Metropolitan Police
- Connexions
- Merton Council's Children, Schools and Families Department
- Safer Merton
- Wimbledon Youth court
- Voluntary groups

Each of our statutory partners contributes staff to the team to help us provide services. We believe our success in reducing and preventing offending lies in working effectively with our partners.

The Youth Justice Service provides the following services:

Appropriate Adult (AA) service

Merton Appropriate Adult Scheme serves Wimbledon police station with volunteers who attend when juveniles or vulnerable adults are held in custody. The Appropriate Adult monitors the detainees' welfare, ensures they are treated in accordance with their rights under PACE [1984] and that they understand what is happening. Appropriate Adults attend interviews, searches, and when photographs, fingerprints and DNA are taken. Merton Appropriate Adult Scheme welcomes enquiries and applications at any time from people who live and/or work in Merton area. An enhanced CRB check is required for this post.

Bail supervision support

We provide support to young people who are given conditional bail. This might be to meet objections to bail, help prevent offending on bail, and ensure the appearance of the young person at court.

These support approaches may include reporting requirements, monitoring whereabouts, and arranging attendance at education and activity programmes.

Court services

The Wimbledon Youth court sits on Mondays and Thursdays each week. There will always be someone from the YJS attending the court. Our work includes presenting court reports to magistrates and judges, and giving advice on remands, including risk assessments and initial instructions when the court imposes Community Orders.





Final Warnings Programme

Final Warnings (FW) and Reprimands replaced cautions for juveniles.

A police officer from the YJS team manages the Final Warnings scheme. Other team members contribute towards a tailored programme designed to reduce the risk of the young person reoffending.

Intensive Support and Surveillance Programme (ISSP)

The ISS combines intensive community based surveillance with intensive supervision with a comprehensive and sustained focus on tackling the factors that contribute to the young person's offending behaviour. Core elements of the ISS are education, training or employment, offending behaviour work, restorative justice, family support, interpersonal skills as well as addressing other individual needs such as substance misuse, accommodation and mental health issues. This disposal is available to courts as a requirement of the Youth Rehabilitation Order, a condition of bail or can be added as a condition to a Notice of Supervision on release from custody. Most young people will spend a minimum of 6 months on ISS, with the first three months being intensive (25 hrs of supervision minimum and a curfew) followed by the less intensive phase during the second three month period (5 hrs minimum).

Parent Support

The majority of parents who attend the programme do so on a voluntary basis, though some are referred by a court through a Parenting Order. Our work with parents has significantly grown in recent years, both in terms of individual and group work. Parenting Interventions are designed to reduce parenting risk factors often linked to anti-social behaviour, and strengthen protective factors (e.g. healthy parent-child relationships). Parenting programmes include: Strengthening Families; Strengthening Communities (SFSC); ESCAPE; Parallel lines; Speakeasy; and a range of interactive one-off workshops.

Referral Order Scheme

If a young person is given a Referral Order they will appear before a Referral Order Panel. The Panel is made up of two members of the Merton community and a YJS representative. The victim is also given the opportunity to attend. The panel must agree a contract with the young person, which includes reparation to the victim or wider community, and a programme of activity to reduce the risk of them re-offending.

In every case, the victim is advised of the sentence issued by the courts and the Restorative Justice options that are available to them.

Reparation work

The YJS Reparation Scheme is based on the idea that young people must take responsibility for their behaviour and that they are helped to understand the consequences of their behaviour.

Reparation is some activity designed to repair the harm caused by the offending behaviour. Reparation can be 'paid back' directly via an apology to the individual victim, a task done for the victim, or indirectly by doing community work.

Court orders requiring reparation insist that we get the views of the victim before arranging direct reparation. We have a number of workers who supervise reparation work in the community.

Supervising young people in the community

The YJS community supervision team is responsible for supervising young people who have been sentenced to Community Sentences, Detention and Training Orders and remands to the Secure Estate.

The team supervise all young people following the National Standards for Youth Justice. We are also responsible for making sure young people meet the requirements of their bail package or order. If young people are not meeting the requirements of their bail package or order we may return them to court.



YJS officers are responsible for gathering information that will allow us to make a thorough assessment of risk. This assessment will help us prepare a programme designed to reduce the risk of the young person re-offending. This may well include a positive activity.

Our health worker, project officer, substance misuse worker, and Connexions officer will also be involved in individual assessments providing challenge and support to young people.

Victim support

The YJS is responsible for contacting all victims of youth crime. We follow the new Victim Code of Practice (2006). If it is appropriate we offer victims the services of a trained mediator to help resolve disputes.

More commonly, we offer victims the opportunity to get direct reparation or a choice of indirect reparation from a list of community projects. Our Restorative Justice Officer will make sure (with the victim's permission), that the young person is told what impact their offence had on the victim.

Turnaround Project (YISP)

Prevention through early intervention

Turnaround Project also known as the Youth Inclusion & Support Panel (YISP) is an early intervention and youth crime prevention service, designed to prevent the onset of youth offending and anti-social behaviour by offering support services to high risk 8–17 year olds and their families. Partner agencies represented on the YISP panel include Education, Health, Children's Fund, Social Care, Youth Service, Connexions, Housing, Youth Justice Service, Safer Merton and voluntary groups.

Interventions include mentoring, group and 1-2-1 work, parenting support and positive diversionary activities (e.g. music projects, photography, horse riding, angling, football etc). We have a team of experienced YISP keyworkers and parenting officers that work with families towards positive outcomes.

Merton Family Intervention Project (FIP)

Merton FIP is an intensive intervention and support project aiming to tackle the underlying problems causing persistent anti-social behaviour and offending within families. The FIP team considers the needs of their clients as parents, children and siblings, rather than as isolated individuals.

Each family that meets the criteria and agrees to take part is allocated a key-worker, who undertakes a detailed assessment of the family's needs. A family contract is then agreed with the family. The contract specifies the support that they will receive, including rewards and possible sanctions. The FIP key worker acts as lead professional with the family for 12–18 months, spending up to 10 hours per week supporting the family to implement the positive changes agreed in the contract.

Multi Systemic Therapy (MST)

Developed in America, MST seeks to help young people (aged 11–17) modify their behaviour or emotional problems to achieve long-term outcomes. It is an intensive family and community based treatment that lasts three – six months, principally through regular key worker contacts with the family.

Merton Triage

Triage is a scheme that provides a fresh option of early diversion for young people that have been arrested for first-time low level offences. This scheme is for Merton young people between the ages of 10–17 that have been arrested and admitted guilt for minor crimes. The process involves The Police, Merton Youth Justice Service (YJS) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Triage offers packages of support aimed at preventing re-offending. Such support includes: 1-2-1 work, mentoring, positive activities and restorative options.



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