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Swansea Youth Justice Service (YJS)

Service Delivery Plan During the COVID-19 Pandemic

March 2020

Swansea Youth Justice Service: COVID-19 Operating Model and Service Delivery Plan

Courts

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) have announced that as per Public Health Wales (PHW) guidance, only essential and imminent matters will be listed before the Court. The YJS will be required to participate at bail and remand hearings.

Swansea YJS has a dedicated Court Officer who checks each morning whether any young people have been detained overnight for attendance at Court.

In the event that a young person is placed before the Court, the YJS will liaise with the Court to discuss the most appropriate means of the YJS providing representation, whether that be via telephone, video conferencing or in person with assurances that strict social distancing measures are in place in line with PHW guidance. The YJS Officer will ascertain from detention staff whether the young person has been asked screening questions and whether they are:

- Experiencing a high temperature (fever)
- Experiencing a new continuous cough
- And/or they have been self-isolating due to residing with a person displaying the above symptoms.

If detention staff respond positively to any of the above, then the YJS Officer will liaise with their line manager. They will not attend the Court.

If detention staff confirm that the young person is not displaying either symptom and has not been self-isolating, then the YJS Officer may be required to attend Court if all other options are not available or are not considered appropriate.

All courts will be asked for long adjournment dates/Pre-Sentence Report dates.

Following Court, the young person and any family members will be spoken to by the Court Officer, from a safe distance, who will explain the outcome of the Court hearing and will advise on how they will be contacted by the YJS for the purposes of assessment.

YJS to consider if additional staff member/s are required to attend Court dependent upon risk and need. In this event, they would travel separately to maintain social distancing advice.

Verbal stand down reports could be considered on a case by case basis in agreement with the Court. Consideration needs to be given to the timeliness of the last YJS assessment, in particular, whether it within the three month YJB guideline. Verbal stand downs are not appropriate for potential custody cases.

Bail and Remand Courts are being held, when required, at Swansea Magistrates Court. Should any young people from Swansea be detained for court on a Saturday,

the YJS Court Officer will attend. Support will also be provided by a manager/Practice Lead in these instances. This Court also hears cases from Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire and Powys. Swansea YJS have agreed with Carmarthenshire and Powys YJS that should a young person, from these areas, be required to appear before the Court, we will attend Court and work alongside their identified Court Officers (via phone) to ensure that the Court are provided with all the relevant information in respect of the young person. Should the young person be remanded, their local YJS will ensure all the relevant paperwork is completed and shared with the secure establishment.

The Court is currently working towards hearing taking place via video link, this is due to take place in Swansea in June 2020.

Bail and Remand Hearings

i) Bail

The Court Officer will need to consider the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 outbreak when proposing a feasible bail package. For instance, Bail Support will involve telephone calls rather than face-to-face contact. The use of external controls such as an Electronically Monitored Curfew will need to be carefully assessed in view of the heightened risks of domestic abuse within family homes.

Officers will be aware that as of the 30th of March 2020, Location Monitoring (LM) GPS tags are available to the Court as part of sentencing or bail packages. Further information regarding LM can be found at:

[Y:\Shared\EDYouthJustice\3 - Statutory YJ Team\COURT INFORMATION\GPS Tagging](#)

ii) Remand to the Care of the Local Authority

If the young person's behavior is so serious that Remand to the Care of the LA is a consideration, then the Court Officer should immediately notify their line manager and Children's Services. The COVID-19 pandemic is placing significant pressures on all critical services therefore the LA's ability to secure an appropriate placement may be very limited.

Should the Court persist with the Remand to the Care of the LA, then the YJS Duty/Court Officer would be required to ensure that a referral is made to IIAA, where the young person is not already known to Social Services, or liaise directly with the named Social Worker, where they are known. The Duty/Court Officer would also be required to update the Operational Manager who would then discuss this with the Principal Officer to ensure that there is sufficient oversight of the situation.

It is essential that a copy of the Remand Notice is obtained by the Court Officer before they depart from the Court. If the young person is an out of county child, then the remand paperwork must be made out to their home Local Authority.

As the young person is now remanded to the Care of the Local Authority, the Court Officer will need to liaise with their line manager regarding transport. The decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

iii) **Remand to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA)**

Should the Court Officer identify that the young person is likely to be remanded or sentenced to YDA, they should notify their line manager immediately. Their line manager can subsequently support with AssetPlus stages and liaise with the Youth Custody Service.

Given the current situation, it is important to ensure the AssetPlus process is adhered to, to ensure appropriate safeguarding of children and young people. It is particularly important that the latest AssetPlus Custody Stage is sent to Youth Custody Service Placements Team at the earliest opportunity. This should be completed via Connectivity where possible. In the event that connectivity is not possible, the AssetPlus should be sent to the following regional secure email address:

YCSPT-Wales@justice.gov.uk

The Court Officer should discuss any concerns they have regarding the sharing of custody related information with the Senior Placement Officer.

Secure Estate

All secure estates have implemented procedures in response to COVID-19. All visits have been cancelled and meetings are being conducted via telephone conferencing and Skype.

Discussions need to be had between YJS Officers and the secure estate to establish communication methods instead of direct contact/planning meetings/reviews/licence arrangements.

When contacting children in the secure estate discussions can include:

- Safeguarding – any concerns expressed by the child?
- Welfare
- Family contact arrangement for the child during lockdown period
- Financial situation/money for calls to family etc.
- Advocacy
- Contact methods for the children for YJS staff and families
- Provide any info needed/check understanding of situation

YJS Officers should contact the secure estate staff and the young person on a regular basis. This will ensure that any information regarding Early or Executive releases are communicated in a timely manner.

YJS Officers should contact the young person's immediate family on a regular basis to provide reassurance. YJS Officers should notify family members that there is an expectation that they will transport a young person upon release. In the event that

the young person is not returning home, alternative accommodation will have been sourced prior to release and, if appropriate, a travel warrant will be obtained.

Appropriate Adults (AA)

Swansea YJS has an AA duty rota. Should the Police contact the YJS for AA representation; the following procedures will be followed.

The YJS AA will liaise with the Custody Sergeant to ensure that they have exhausted all alternative options by contacting the young person's family and friends.

If there are no alternatives, the AA will clarify whether representation can be made via Skype.

Where it is felt that the young person requires an AA to be in attendance at the police station the AA will ascertain from custody staff whether the young person is:

- Experiencing a high temperature (fever)
- Experiencing a new continuous cough
- And/or they have been self-isolating due to residing with a person displaying the above symptoms.

If custody staff respond positively to any of the above, then the AA will liaise with their line manager to identify an appropriate and safe solution. If possible, in these circumstances, AA duties will go ahead via Skype.

If custody staff confirm that the young person is not displaying either symptom and has not been self-isolating, then the AA may be required to attend the Police Station. They will adhere to PHW Guidance including maintaining social distancing and will be provided with appropriate PPE by the Police. South Wales Police have confirmed that this will be available.

The AA will verify how the young person is returning home, but will not provide transport.

Assessments

Initial, review and closure Asset Plus assessments and Bureau assessment will be completed via telephone or WhatsApp video call.

It is acknowledged that the quality of the assessments may reduce due to virtual interviews. Furthermore, access to information held by other agencies may not be forthcoming during a time where many services are closed and staff redeployed.

Any outstanding information required will be recorded on the AssetPlus or Bureau assessment, and this will be followed up as soon as practically possible.

Standards and Scaled Approach

All young people known to the YJS have been RAG rated to identify those who pose the highest risk or require additional support due to concerns around wellbeing.

Red – These young people are the ones identified as being in the greatest need or our highest risk. These young people may require face to face contact in addition to regular phone/video call contact. Contact with these young people will be 1 line with the scaled approach, however, additional contact may be required to support them during the Covid-19 lockdown. All face to face contacts must be agreed by Line Managers and YJS Practice Manager.

Amber – These young people are considered to pose a medium risk and may have some additional wellbeing issues that require our service to maintain regular contact. Contact will primarily be via telephone or video calls however, in essential circumstances face to face contacts may also be agreed by Line Managers and the YJS Practice Manager.

Green – These young people are considered to be our lowest risk in respect of the risk they pose and/or their wellbeing needs. These young people will be monitored via telephone/video calls only.

Where face to face contacts are considered necessary, a home visit would consist of knocking on the door and then retreating 2 meters. This would simply achieve having 'eyes on' the young person rather than engaging in interventions or in-depth conversations.

Young people subject to Court Orders or Licence conditions will be informed that contact with the YJS via phone or video call is in place of their face to face statutory contact. The contacts offered will be in line with the old Scaled Approach.

Young people engaging with Bureau disposals will be offered telephone contact in line with their Out of Court disposal.

Young people and families engaging on a prevention basis will also be offered telephone/Video calls as a means of remaining in voluntary contact with the YJS.

Any new prevention referrals received during the COVID-19 pandemic will be placed on hold, unless deemed critical.

If there are imminent Risk of Serious Harm concerns to others, the Case Manager will follow usual procedures by contacting the Seconded Police Officer, 101 reporting or 999 depending upon their seriousness and urgency of the situation. Similarly, the YJS will continue to submit any Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns to Children's via the IAA service.

Panels – Referral Order and Bureau

As outlined above, virtual Bureau assessments will continue to be allocated and completed.

Bureau panels are held through Skype/Teams and involve Police, YJS and a Volunteer. The YJS report is shared and discussed and an outcome is decided upon. The YJS Seconded Police Officer will then make contact with the young person and their parent/carer by phone during which the outcome is delivered. This is then followed up by a home visit from the YJS seconded Police Officer, who will deliver the Bureau paperwork for signature. Arrangements will be made for an appropriate time for this paperwork to be collected. All home visits strictly follow social distancing guidelines.

The YJS seconded Police Officer then updates the police system with the outcome and YJS admin will update the YJS case management system.

Referral Order panels are held virtually where possible. Where this is not possible, and it is safe to do so, the Youth Justice Centre may be used as a space for holding Referral Order Panels for those members who do not have access to Skype. Numbers are strictly limited to those who can't attend virtually to ensure that social distancing is maintained throughout. Screening questions will be asked prior to the panel, over the phone to ensure no one attending the panel is:

- Experiencing a high temperature (fever)
- Experiencing a new continuous cough
- And/or they have been self-isolating due to residing with a person displaying the above symptoms.

If anyone is then the panel meeting will not go ahead.

Reparation Hours

Conventional Reparation and Junior Attendance Centre (JAC) sessions will not proceed as they would infringe upon Public Health Wales guidance. Weekend contact will be provided via telephone/video calls and home visits where necessary.

An alternative to reparation could include allocating the young person educational resources to complete. This could include resources focused on community, citizenship, and the environment. For example, the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Blue Planet, Victim Services website etc. This could promote subsequent discussions with the young person. This is clearly dependent on the young person having access to the Internet.

In some cases, it may be appropriate for the young person to complete reparation within their family home, supported housing, or residential unit.

Victims and Restorative Justice

The YJS Seconded Police Officer will continue to liaise with the YJS Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) to ensure that contact is made with victims via telephone. It is acknowledged that convening victim impact assessments via telephone conferencing is far from ideal, however, it is important that victims continue to have a voice. The VLO will continue to contact and update victims who have requested ongoing services.

Victim impact sessions will continue to be delivered as part of case management interventions.

Substance Misuse Interventions

Similarly, Substance Misuse Intervention will continue through telephone or video calls. The level of contact will be determined by the individual level of risk, need and intervention. In certain circumstances it may be necessary to agree to home visits. In these instances, social distancing will be maintained and screening questions will be asked prior to the visit via telephone call.

ETE

Swansea schools remain open for the children of key workers, and for children who are deemed vulnerable. Information relating to young people known to Swansea Child and Family Service who are accessing this support is held centrally. The YJS ETE Officer is available to all YJS staff who may have some concerns about the young people they are working with. The ETE Officer is the link between the YJS, schools, colleges and training providers in the local area and will provide support to young people who require this during Covid-19.

Childview recordings for ALL cases should include:

Risks

As stated above, all cases are RAG rated and this is recorded on Childview and can be pulled into a report to easily identify the young people in each category. The Rag relates to the risk of serious harm, re-offending and safety and well-being levels. Contact frequency is also updated for each case to reflect the level of contact they are having during Covid-19, related to their RAG status.

Communication

All case notes evidence the means by which a young person and their parents/carers have been contacted, accepting that currently telephone contact is in place of a formal face to face statutory contact.

Interventions

Accepting that in the current situation it is more difficult to undertake a full intervention. Case notes will detail the discussion had with the young person, any issues that have been raised and how these are being managed.

Other Agencies

Any discussions with other agencies are to be clearly referenced in case notes. If any pieces of work, relating to the intervention, cannot be completed due to external agencies not being in a position to provide support, this needs to be evidenced by updating the specific task and recording in a case note.

Frequency of Management Oversight

This will depend on the level of risk and whether any significant events take place. There should be evidence of greater Management oversight in respect of Red and Amber rated cases. Reference to any Risk Management Meetings or Safeguarding/Child Protection procedures should be reflected in Management oversight.

Risk Management Meetings, MAPPA and Missing Exploited Trafficked Panels

YJS will continue to facilitate virtual Risk Management/Planning Meetings on all young people assessed as high ROSH and/or high SWB. YJS will also be represented virtually at all risky behavior meetings, MISPER meetings and strategy meetings.

The YJS will continue to participate in MAPPA meetings via telephone conferencing/Skype.

Supervision

The COVID-19 pandemic requires all YJS staff to work from home. This can heighten anxieties and create a sense of isolation. Indeed, decisions and assessments usually made with input and reflection from peers are increasingly made in isolation. It is therefore essential that supervision continues.

Supervisions will take place virtually on a monthly basis as is the norm.

Managers continue to be available on a daily basis to discuss complex cases and to provide emotional support.

Team Meetings

Team meetings will take place once weekly in order to ensure regular connection with the team and an opportunity for any concerns to be raised and addressed. The team meeting will also focus on what is working well with a view of enhancing morale.

YJS regional and YJB national meetings will continue via teleconferencing. Managers contributing to the meetings will send updates to the team to ensure that the latest information is shared.

A daily update is provided to all staff in the Authority from the Director of Social

Services highlighting all the latest developments.

Staff working locations

All Swansea YJS staff are currently working from home and are able to remotely access emails and the case management recording system.

Team members are aware that if necessary, they may be required to support other essential and critical services.

Staff Well-Being

At this difficult time, it is important that we take time to look after ourselves. Everyone will adapt differently to working from home and social isolation, and there is no right or wrong way, so please find the way which works best for you.

Well-being suggestions are included in the daily update from the Director of Social Services and can be accessed on via staffnet.

YJB Contacts

In the event that you are required to contact the YJB, the Wales regional contacts are:

Sue Thomas
Mark Cox

07989130696
07825860597

Sue.Thomas@yjb.gov.uk
mark.cox@yjb.gov.uk