

Islington Youth Justice Service

Review of Joint Working with Police Learning and Development Professionalism Directorate

March 2023

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Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Disproportionality & the Youth Justice System	2
3. Work Strands	2
4. Student Officer Training	3
5. Involvement of Young People & Parent Champions	4
6. Feedback	5
7. Looking Forward	7
8. Conclusion	7
9. Appendices	8
Appendix 4: Feedback from Police Recruits	9

Glossary

YJS Youth Justice Service

YJB Youth Justice Board

CMG Community Monitoring Group

DTM Deputy Team Manager

L&D Learning and Development

BCU Borough Command Unit

VRU Violence Reduction Unit

1. Introduction

Islington YJS is committed to tackling disproportionality within the YJS and wider systems. We continue to explore disproportionality and strive to work closely with our partners to address these areas through our work. Islington YJS works in alignment with the wider council's strategic vision and plan (Appendix 1) in line with being an anti-racist organisation. We have also developed an overview of all work being completed and an operational plan focused on disproportionality covering an array of areas (Appendix 2). Through the development of these plans and a monthly disproportionality working group, led by Islington YJS disproportionality lead, we continue to develop work in tackling disproportionality and consider ideas to actively address these issues. Through all this work we have built positive working relationships with the Police Learning and Development (L&D) Directorate and have since 2021 been contributing directly to the training of police recruits amongst other areas. This report will provide an overview of this partnership work, proposed outcomes, and an evaluation of the work to date.

2. Disproportionality & the Youth Justice System

Disproportionality impacts upon several areas within and closely connected to the YJS including, but not limited to, outcomes in relation to education, early childhood experiences, healthcare, identification of additional needs, court outcomes, stop and search and custodial and remand rates. The YJB have developed an infographic entitled 'Exploring Racial Disparity: How it affects children in their early years and within the youth justice system' (December 2021) this infographic summarises via a number of sources disparities faced by children and young people (see Appendix 3).

3. Work Strands

There are several strands of the joint work that we are involved in alongside the Police L&D Directorate which have developed and expanded across time. We have recently been involved in a pilot around 'Community Encounters – Continued Professional Development' where different community stakeholders contribute to the ongoing professional development of Police Officers in the role. The pilot day we were involved in was focussed on the lived experiences of stop and search. This is a new and ongoing piece of work which is being reviewed as part of the Police's wider pilot.

A further piece of joined up working is an invitation to join the 'Engagement- Community Reference Group' which is in its infancy and will involve being part of a monthly network of front-line professionals and services. This will be with Community Engagement Lead police colleagues with the aim to bring together various partners to ensure there is ongoing communication of how we can work alongside the police to continue building upon relationships between professionals and the community.

The disproportionality lead also attends the stop and search Community Monitoring Group (CMG) which is led monthly by Sheri Lawal, the Independent Stop and Search

Commissioner for Islington. The CMG is made up of police, residents, partners, and local councillors. The CMG provides an opportunity to regularly review monthly data pertaining to stop and searches in Islington and Camden, the opportunity to review body worn footage of stop and searches, discuss community events and engagement and build further positive working relationships.

The main area of joint working has been the Student Officer Training which I will expand upon further below.

4. Student Officer Training

This training was developed in 2021 following an introduction to the L&D Inspector Simon Castle. We have set up a bi-monthly programme where we deliver a session to student police officers in the Islington and Camden BCU exploring young person and parent/carer experiences of policing, specifically stop and search. The session was developed with the focus of incorporating the lived experience of young people to open up discussions around topics such as race, disproportionality, communication, use of police force and their experiences of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ policing. An important element was to provide the student officers with thoughts and ideas they can take forward into their roles. The session was further developed in May 2022 where we included a second part to the session which covered the lived experience of parents. We now deliver a two-part session covering both aspects and have developed discussion points to consider the neurodiversity of young people, the involvement of parents, and the lasting trauma impacts of stop and search. We have also been able to utilise this space to provide opportunity for discussion and allow young people and parents to ask questions of the student officers also. As outlined in the table below we have trained 175 officers.

The hope is that these sessions will continue to contribute to the learning and development of student officers as well as promoting community relations.

Date of Session	Number of Referrals	Number of YP Attended	Service Referred From	Number of Parent/Carers	Number of Student Officers
02/11/2021	9	3	YJS	0	23
24/02/2022	6	3	YJS	0	15
03/05/2022	10	5	YJS, TYS, CSC	3	35

Date of Session	Number of Referrals	Number of YP Attended	Service Referred From	Number of Parent/Carers	Number of Student Officers
14/07/2022	12	5	YJS, YP Advocate, YCSMAS	0	34
15/09/2022	13	4	Peer advocate, TYS	3	35
09/01/2023	10	9	Youth Counsellors	2	7
27/03/2023	6	2	Peer Advocates	3	26
Total	66	31		11	175

5. Involvement of Young People & Parent Champions

Through the work that is being carried out we have been working closely with young people and parents/carers to ensure that the voices of the individuals that we work with and those with lived experience are brought to the forefront of the training sessions. At each Student Officer training session young people who are open to services within Young Islington are invited to attend as well as parents/ carers. We have also been working closely with three parents who are VRU Parent Champions for Islington and Camden who attend the training sessions regularly.

To date three Parent Champions have attended four out of seven training sessions and in total across all the sessions delivered 31 young people have attended. Parent Champions and young people are all provided with a voucher and thank you letter for their attendance. As well as this those young people who have reparation hours are awarded hours for their attendance. This fits into the criteria of reparation as young people are directly inputting into the learning and development of the student officers and as such are giving back to the community in this way. As of March 2023 the MET have secured funding for their community input training and the Parent Champions will be formally paid by the MET for their attendance at these sessions.

Young people are supported and offered preparation sessions before joining the training session to ensure that they understand the purpose of the session and feel comfortable in attending. As well as this, the session is risk assessed to ensure that no potential issues will arise. Some young people, for a variety of reason, do not feel comfortable attending the group space for the training session and so we provide them the opportunity to share written feedback. To date we have written feedback from 10 young people. The written feedback follows the below template:

- What influenced your choices when you got involved in an offence?
- What might have diverted you away from crime?
- What was your first contact with the police?
- What does bad policing look like?
- What does/ would good policing look like?
- What difference might good policing make/ have made to you?

Young people are supported to complete this with their allocated case manager and advised that this will be used to inform the training sessions.

6. Feedback

In order to obtain feedback a number of questionnaires have been developed:

- Feedback from young people
- Feedback from parents/ carers

Across all sessions delivered between November 2021 and March 2023 8 young people have completed the feedback questionnaire. The feedback we obtained showed that all young people had a good understanding of the purpose of the session, 63% of young people felt like the sessions would not have an impact on the future behaviour of student officers in a positive way. Considering this high percentage, thought has been given to the lived negative experiences of our young people and this further demonstrates that there is a long way to go in terms of rebuilding trust between young people and the police. Positively, all young people felt that they had the opportunity to share their voice and were able to discuss issues such as stop and search, racism, how they feel they have been treated by police, disproportionality, racial profiling, micro-aggressions, how to interact with young people and what police officers can do in the future.

All three parent champions have completed the parent/ carer feedback questionnaire which demonstrated that 66% felt that the sessions would have a positive impact on the future actions of student officers. They all felt that they had a good opportunity to share their voice and that they would attend the session again. General feedback is that the parents felt all officers not just student officers should partake in this training. The parents felt that through the training they were able to discuss topics including their own

experiences as mothers, neurodiversity, race, trauma, minority groups and stop and search.

We have received input from Inspector Simon Castle regarding feedback from the Student Officers who has provided the following overview:

'Familiarisation week takes place in the twelfth week (of eighteen) of police recruits' initial training. Our intention is to give context to the theory they are being taught and to provide them with an early taste of the local communities in which they will work.

As the Learning & Development Inspector of Central North Command (Camden and Islington), I was very keen that our new officers heard from those being policed, especially young people. I feel it's important to understand that:

- Few people are "good" or "bad"
- Many of our "suspects" have been subject to serious adverse childhood experiences and might be better considered as victims.
- Urgent calls that were made ten minutes before police arrival may have causes such as poor health (especially mental health), education, housing or abusive relationships that date back ten or more years.

I want our new officers to recognise that a good police officer will not see arrest as the end of their role. I want to steer them towards a deeper engagement and longer-term thinking. I re-visit these themes with them during their first operational deployments in training (our ten week "Street duties" course) during which all officers must give a presentation on a local community. Community sessions are also a feature of the week that marks their "passing out" as ready for unsupervised patrol. Finally, our degree apprentices work on a dissertation with a community theme in their third year. With three or four different approaches to this theme, I am optimistic that the learning they first hear from YOS at the Lift is deeply embedded within them at a formative stage in their careers.

Before YJS involvement, we held sessions with young people who choose to send time at the Lift youth space . The early sessions were highly successful due to a high level of distrust towards police from the young people. In two years, that distrust has evaporated. While that's a great result for the young people and police generally, it has made the sessions less impactful. The YJS sessions on the other hand naturally bring up more disturbing histories and provoke deeper thought among the student officers. Your idea of bringing mothers of young people was simply genius; it broadens the understanding further and gives officers another avenue for joined-up support for the young people.

The numbers of new recruits coming through our training has never been higher than the last year or so. As a result, it won't be long before it's likely that at least one of any pair of officers on patrol will have experienced this ground-breaking input. I am massively grateful for your enthusiastic support and hope that we can continue with this excellent example of collaboration.'

Overall, the sessions delivered obtained the following ratings:

Cohort	Score
22-109	5.0
22-106	4.8
22-104	4.3
22-102	4.5
21-110	4.8
21-107	4.5

Additional written feedback was shared via the free-text box in the Student Officer’s feedback survey (Appendix 4).

7. Looking Forward

Looking forward to 2023-2024 the student officer training sessions, as part of the officer’s familiarisation week, will continue to be run on a bi-monthly basis with continued input from the Parent Champions and young people. Positively the Police have been provided with additional funding through which parents who want to assist with the delivery, will be eligible for formal payment for their contribution to these sessions. Further work needs to be done to capture feedback from more of the young people who attend the training sessions as feedback completion numbers to date are limited. As well as this, we need to develop a regular format of obtaining the feedback of the student police officers, perhaps on a quarterly basis, and this will assist with analysis.

Further plans for the future will include exploring potential involvement of CAMHS colleagues to provide additional input around the impact of stop and search on our young people’s emotional wellbeing.

Consideration will be given to attending POP week which is a session held towards the end of the student officers training and developing a session that has more of a mental health focus.

Through continued network meetings we will be inputting feedback and be part of the review process about the pilot Community Development days.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the work to date has contributed to increased relationships between our services, the police, and our local communities. Overall, the work around the police recruit training has been the largest piece of work and has generated meaningful and insightful

discussions between student police officers and young people and parents. The feedback highlights that those who attended felt that their voices were heard, and they were given a meaningful space, on both parts of the student officers and young people and parents. Feedback from young people and parents also noted that they were overall unsure about whether the sessions would have a long-lasting impact of the attitudes and behaviours of police officers, whilst disappointing, not a surprise given the embedded and systemic issues which need to be addressed within the police force as a whole. Student officers certainly felt the session was insightful and provided them with viewpoints they had not previously considered. Another important aspect and positive outcome is the opportunity for young people, parents, and student officers to have a positive interaction with each other. Lasting thoughts are that long term impact will be challenging to evaluate without the implication of a long-term study, which would likely be out of the scope and remit of the YJS at this time. This is an area that requires consideration where possible.

9. Appendices

- Appendix 4: Feedback from Police Recruits

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I think the David Williams Divert talk and the LIFT talks were really insightful and amazing to see both sides of the conversation; what we can be doing to take a more empathetic approach to policing.
Community young offenders visit and the role plays were really useful.
The community engagement session was very interesting and inspiring. It definitely gave me more motivation to be the best police officer I can be.
It was grounding and a reality check. I think all officers should go through it as some have not lived a hard life and they need to see how actions affect people and circumstances.
Inspirational and a great opportunity
The youth centre was great, especially hearing from the Mum's perspective. It was a view point I hadn't really considered.
Really enjoyed spending time at the Lift with young offenders and young people. Found the discussions really interesting.
I loved visiting the YOS and engaging with the young people to see their views and experiences.
The thing I found really useful was the young offenders session. It was extremely informative and a great deal of insight to all of us, especially a not-very-diverse cohort.
The young offender session was eye-opening.