



Report to Scrutiny

Item Number: 5

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information

No

Subject of Report: Knife Crime – Partner Updates

Meeting: *Scrutiny Review Panel 2 – 2018/2019: Knife Crime and Youth Engagement*
18th September 2018

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Brief: On reviewing the people aspect of knife crime to consider which people/services are involved in what ways at the various stages in the prevention and support provided.

Recommendations: The Panel is recommended to:

- consider and comment on the information provided about the people aspect of knife crime in the borough; and
- make suggestions for further improvements accordingly.

1. Introduction

People engaged in knife crime and sentencing (1)

Magistrates Sentencing Guidelines

Introduction

The Sentencing Council for England and Wales was set up to promote greater transparency and consistency in sentencing, whilst maintaining the independence of the judiciary.

The primary role of the Council is to issue guidelines on sentencing which the courts must follow unless it is in the interests of justice not to do so.

The Sentencing Council is an independent, non-departmental public body of the Ministry of Justice and replaced the Sentencing Guidelines Council and the Sentencing Advisory Panel in April 2010.

Functions.

The Sentencing Council has responsibility for:

- **developing sentencing guidelines** and monitoring their use;
- **assessing the impact of guidelines on sentencing practice.** It may also be required to consider the impact of policy and legislative proposals relating to sentencing, when requested by the Government; and
- **promoting awareness amongst the public** regarding the realities of sentencing and publishing information regarding sentencing practice in Magistrates' and the Crown Court.

Additional functions.

In addition to the functions above, the Council must:

- consider the impact of sentencing decisions on **victims**;
- monitor the **application of the guidelines**, better to predict the effect of them; and
- play a greater part in promoting understanding of, and **increasing public confidence** in, sentencing and the criminal justice system.

Appointments to the Council.

All judicial appointments are made by the Lord Chief Justice with the agreement of the Lord Chancellor whilst non-judicial appointments are made by the Lord Chancellor with the agreement of the Lord Chief Justice following open competition.

In November 2013 Lord Justice Treacy was appointed Chairman of the Sentencing Council. He replaced the first Chairman, Lord Justice Leveson, who was appointed in November 2009.

Accountability and governance

The Council is accountable to Parliament for the delivery of its statutory remit set out in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009. This Act also provides that the Lord Chancellor may provide the Council with such assistance as it requests regarding the performance of its functions.

The Council is accountable to the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice as accounting officer and to Ministers for the efficient and proper use of public funds delegated to the Council. Ministers are also responsible for protecting the Council's independence.

New Sentencing Guidelines for the Possession of weapons and the threats to use them.

Sentencing Council has published a new guideline for the sentencing of offenders convicted of the possession of a bladed article or offensive weapon, such as acid, in public, and of using one to threaten someone.

The new guideline will help ensure consistency in sentencing and that sentence levels reflect Parliament's concern about the social problem of offenders carrying knives.

This concern has led to several changes to the law in recent years, in particular the introduction of several new offences, such as that of threatening with a bladed article/offensive weapon in a public place.

Some of these new offences, such as those involving threats, also have mandatory minimum sentences, which courts must apply unless it would be unjust to do so.

Leading Court of Appeal judgments have also emphasised the seriousness of this type of offending and have set out sentence levels that senior judges see as appropriate for dealing with offenders.

The proposed guideline takes these changes to the law and court judgments into account in consolidated, up to date guidance. It ensures that those offenders convicted of offences involving knives or particularly dangerous weapons, as well as those who repeatedly offend, will receive the highest sentences. The introduction of the guideline may therefore lead to some increases in sentence levels, predominantly in relation to adults convicted of possession offences.

There is a mandatory minimum sentence of six months custody set by law for offenders who use any type of weapon to threaten. As the guideline gives the highest sentences to those offenders who threaten with knives or highly dangerous weapons, these offenders will always receive sentences greater than six months. The combination of the legislation and the guideline may therefore mean that there is an increase in sentences received by some offenders convicted of these offences.

The new guideline applies both to adults and those under 18. In relation to the latter, the guideline will work alongside the Sentencing Children and Young People guideline and encourage courts to look in far greater detail at the age/maturity, background and

circumstances of each offender in order to reach the most appropriate sentence that will best achieve the aim of preventing reoffending, which is the main function of the youth justice system.

The guideline was subject to a public consultation and a number of changes were made as a result of feedback received. For example, as a result of requests, additional guidance has been included as to what constitutes a highly dangerous weapon. This has been set out as follows: “An offensive weapon is defined in legislation as ‘any article made or adapted for use for causing injury, or is intended by the person having it with him for such use’. A highly dangerous weapon is, therefore, a weapon, including a corrosive substance (such as acid), whose dangerous nature must be substantially above and beyond this. The court must determine whether the weapon is highly dangerous on the facts and circumstances of the case.”

Some consultees also asked for more guidance about when it would be unjust to impose a statutory minimum sentence. The guideline now includes a section covering this.

There have also been some structural changes to the categorisation of culpability and harm. To show a clearer gradation of seriousness, an additional level of culpability has been added and the levels of harm set out have been simplified.

Somali Advice and Development Centre (SADC) (2)

Foundation

Founded in November 2002, SADC is a registered charity that serves mainly the Somali Community in Ealing. We work in close cooperation with the local statutory agencies including Schools, Police, Social Services, Children and Youth Services, the voluntary organisations and community to help young people who are at risk of crime and antisocial behaviour. We also provide intervention programmes to support and divert young people who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system or are already involved in criminal activity.

Introduction

Rooted in the community we serve; we act as a bridge to mainstream statutory services. SADC provides intervention programmes to support and divert Somali young people who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system or are already involved in criminal activities. SADC is known to empower the community by helping disadvantaged children, youth and families through provision of education, advice and guidance and crime diversionary programs. SADC is an exceptional project run by highly skilled, talented and committed staff and volunteers that has the trust of both the community and the statutory partners.

Somali children make up nearly 10% of the school age population in Ealing. As a relatively new community in the UK who arrive from war torn countries - mainly as refugees, they experience extensive deprivation and barriers, including language, to understand and access statutory services. SADC act as a bridge between the community and the statutory sector – schools, social care, health, Police etc to help families understand and work with statutory agencies to bring about the best outcomes for their families and the wider community. Somali young people are significantly over represented in gangs and youth crime linked to multiple deprivation factors and in school exclusions. SADC advocate for the young people, helping them and their parents better trust and understand the statutory services that can assist them and improve their life chances. Services provided include family counselling, individual mentoring led by positive older Somali role models, hosting an annual Youth Speak Out Somali Conference now in its 5th year and outreach community work with local Mosques and women's group. Much of this work is undertaken in partnership with statutory agencies such as Social Care, Schools and the Police.

SADC is an effective voluntary sector group with a solid base of inspiring young adults who give back their time and energy to more vulnerable younger members of the community.

Our mission:

Our mission is to support and empower the community by helping disadvantaged children, youth and families through provision of education, advice and guidance, and crime diversionary programs.

What we do:

- Diversionary programs for young people at risk of crime
- Advice and Guidance Surgery for disadvantaged families
- Early intervention program for vulnerable children
- Mentoring sessions at Feltham Young Offenders Institute
- Community Advocacy
- Mentoring students with challenging behaviours
- Early Intervention service to support children and families
- Youth Club

Our Main Objectives:

- Divert young people from criminal lifestyle
- Reduce the rate of reoffending within young offenders
- Reduce the number of young people NEET
- Help new arrivals to access mainstream statutory services
- Improve the relationship between the community and statutory agencies
- Encourage active parents' engagement with schools
- Reduce young people's vulnerability to radical extremist narrative
- Support children and families and prevent risk of family breakdown
- Improve outcomes for Somali adolescents in care

Mentoring Young People at Risk

This project targets young people mainly from a Somali background living in the London Borough of Ealing who are at risk of crime or criminal influences. The key aim of the project is to divert young people away from a gang lifestyle and create positive alternative opportunities through an early-intervention programme. The main method used to achieve this is one-to-one mentoring to help young Somali people to address their current situation and also look for positive pathways, tailored specifically to them, to move them away from criminal involvement.

Our outreach youth workers have a profound understanding of the cultural and social context of the Somali community in the UK, enabling them to relate to the young Somali people who are caught between the mainstream culture of the UK and the traditional culture of their parents. SADC's work in this respect is extremely effective, as staff can mediate between children and their parents that are simultaneously caught in a generational and cultural gap.

Subsequently, a key focus is placed on positive involvement in education, training and employment as an alternate route away from crime. Working closely with the youth justice service, police gangs team, social services, schools, and mosques. The project also integrates local cultural networks in order to holistically build the capacity of the community to address these issues.

Prevent Programme

Since the threat of radicalisation of young people has become a huge concern within the community, with many young people at risk, SADC delivers counter-radicalisation

workshops for young people and parents. SADC has worked to combat radicalisation over the past few years, primarily through workshops and the Ealing Somali Youth Event.

Our workshops help to build the resilience of the young people against the radicalisation and extremist narrative. We work closely with the Ealing Prevent team to make sure we are contributing to the local dialogue and delivery of Prevent and making a real difference to all our communities.

Annual Ealing Somali Youth Conference

The Somali community in Ealing does not have a platform where socioeconomic issues are thoroughly discussed, and voices are heard. For the young people in Ealing, the Ealing Somali Youth Conference, now having run for five consecutive years, has become almost like a tradition. It provides a rare and consistent opportunity for young people to not only voice any concerns or questions they may have, but also come face-to-face with young adults from Ealing who were once in their place. The event comes around only once a year, making it a much-awaited occurrence. It is a preventative event that is designed to tackle significant issues, providing them with real solutions, some of which we later incorporate into our organisation to provide them with further support that may be necessary, long after the event has ended.

The majority of Somali young people in Ealing are first-generation British citizens, with parents who often have profound cultural barriers and a lack of assimilation in the wider British society. As a result, young Somali children are prone to the inevitable vulnerabilities and disadvantages that come with being new members of a host community. Subsequently, the objectives of the conference were to raise the awareness of the young people present, in four key areas: educational underachievement, gang culture, sexual exploitation and radicalisation – four areas that are heavily affecting the Somali community.

In essence, is likely to be the only conference in Ealing where Somali children are able to sit amongst members of the council, including councillors, senior member from the Council as well as their local MP. The young people in attendance despite sharing the same first-generation background, did not all come from homes with the same experiences; some of the children had been directly affected by one of the four key areas, sometimes through older immediate family members, whilst others had never been affected by any of the aforementioned risk areas. Subsequently, the event had a wide range of motivational speeches and entertaining performances to capture the attention of all the young people.

More than 100 young people aged between 13 -19 attend this conference every year. As far as we know it is the only event of its kind ever held for Somali Youth in Ealing.

General Advice and Guidance

The main aim of the Advice, Information and Guidance project is to support families, children and youth who are mainly from Somali ethnic background who are residents in Ealing Borough of London. The beneficiaries of this project are mainly hard-to-reach Somali refugees and disadvantaged community who do not access mainstream service provision. Somalis face numerous problems and barriers, particularly as they live in predominately deprived areas, such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas of Southall and Acton. The programme will serve men and women of all ages; carers, single parents, young people at risk, ex-offenders, disabled people, unemployed people, new arrivals as well as those with British citizenship. For each client we see, particularly, women, a whole family of 4-6 members invariably benefits.

The Advice and Guidance service has continued on assisting hard-to-reach and disadvantaged families, children and young people in order to access the mainstream service to them. Specially we assisted families to make them do better informed decisions regarding the well-being of their children. The vast majority of our advice service-users are families with large households who are new to the British life. They lack basic information such as how the local authority and the statutory agencies work, what their entitlements are. The barrier they have is not only language, but institutional and cultural as well. Most of our clients came from a civil war ridden country where there is no law and order as they are victims of traumatic experience, the transition to adapt to the new, contextually different way of life. The service we provide helps these families and children overcome the barriers they face and access essential services they need.

On Wednesdays and Thursdays, the centre operates as a drop-in surgery, where anyone that requires help can show up and are served on a first-come-first-serve basis. On Fridays, the centre works on an appointment system for those whose support requires a considerable length of time, in an attempt to reduce waiting times, as it's inconvenient to deal with time-consuming issues with a waiting room full of people who would like to use the service.

In terms of what support is provided, there is very little that isn't covered: it is very flexible and always mirrors the request of the service user. Typical issues include housing benefit overpayments, council tax support, utility bill disputes and help completing application forms, with typical examples being passport, driver's license, tax credits, child benefit and discretionary housing repayments forms. The majority of the need for support stems from their lack of knowledge about their rights and essentially always - a language barrier.

Subsequently, support is in some cases also extended to non-Somalis who are struggling with the English language. The advice, guidance and advocacy is extended to any vulnerable individual with issues that can be resolved or at least improved either through writing or phone advocacy.

Support is usually provided in the form of written letters, where a concise and coherent letter is written for the service users to send to whichever statutory organisation or service they would like support in communicating with. Mediation and interpretation is also provided over the phone, where the SADC staff make calls to organisations and services across the UK on behalf of the service user regarding their specific issue.

In terms of impact, an approximate average of 40 different individuals attend on any given week and the majority return multiple times in a month. Each adult usually has an average of four dependents, making the average impact rate 160 individuals a week.

Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence

Major part of the work that SADC is doing is to raise the awareness of the vulnerable youth, children and also the parents towards the rise of knife crime and gang violence. We hold youth events which are specific in addressing the vulnerability factors that draw young people to carry knives. Knife crime was the key theme discussed in the last annual youth conference held on 30th of June 2018, where more than 100 young people from Ealing attended.

In addition, we have made an effective outreach to engage the community parents about the nature of gang culture and the knife crime and how best to keep their children safe. We have held workshops for parents at Northolt, Southall and West Ealing and Acton areas, at most of these events we have invited speakers from the Police and Youth Justice Service to talk to parents about the concern around the knife crime and how close partnership between the community and the statutory agencies including Police can help the vulnerable children and youth.

SADC engaged the local mosques in order to reach the wider community and address the vulnerabilities of the youth to knife crime and gang violence. We were invited 3 times for the past one year to speak at major community events held at Darrussalam Mosque at Southall where several hundred parents most of them Ealing residents attended. Each occasion the topic was about how to safeguard children and youth from gang culture, county lines, knife crime and all types of youth violence. Our engagement with community in their traditional community hubs has been very empowering to all participants. Mosque management and the parents have highly appreciated our proactive engagement and they have learned a lot and opened their eyes.

We also reach the community via teleconference programmes which provide parents with a rare opportunity, as this is one of the only spaces, if not the only space, in Britain where Somali women have a hub of their own and where they can openly discuss issues and help each other to find solutions. It is the only platform Somali women have that is not male-dominated. We have delivered 5 lectures about the concerns on CSE, knife crime epidemic, school exclusions, family breakdown and the impact on children, and identity crisis of Somali Youth via the teleconference and on each occasion more than five hundred Ealing residents were audience for the lectures.

The feedback from the community was immensely positive and they found all the workshops very empowering, informative and educative.

The Common Vulnerabilities of Our Service-Users

Our service-users are mainly from Ealing Somali Ethnic Community which is 10% of the borough population. The community has got different socio-economic background in comparison with other communities. Vast majority of them came to the UK after 1997 fleeing from persecution and civil war. Having arrived here in UK, they have

experienced high level of social exclusion because of not being familiar with the language, the mainstream culture, values and institutional arrangements of the country. Because of the extreme difficulty to adapt to the new environment and the absence of meaningful support in their transition to settle, they have become exposed to all forms of deprivations and vulnerabilities. As a result of this Somali youth and children are extremely vulnerable to criminal gang activities.

They often have large single parent households where the father figure is not present for a variety of reasons including impact of the war. The families are frequently experiencing severe economic hardship. This can result in some of the children being very vulnerable to engagement in youth crime, gangs, sexual exploitation, violence and mental health issues. SADC working in a partnership with the local statutory agencies delivers desperately needed services to the local Somali Community. We mentor young people involved in offending or at risk of crime in order to help them divert away from the criminal lifestyle and build their resilience against the criminal influences. Last year SADC worked with 102 young people who are aged 12 – 24 years. More than 88% of the young people we worked with engage with us well, and vast majority of these youth are in schools or study centres or colleges. For those who are not in education, employment or training we help them find education, training or employment.

Redthread (3)

Redthread's Youth Violence Intervention Programme (YVIP) is a hospital-based project which operates from the A&E departments in the four Major Trauma Centres in London; Kings College Hospital, St Mary's Hospital, St Georges and the Royal London and has recently expanded to Nottingham and Birmingham.

YVIP is delivered by a specialised and dedicated team of youth workers who support young people aged 11-24 who present at A&E as victims of serious youth violence and exploitation.

It is during this point of crisis, that we utilise our unique position, embedded in the emergency department alongside clinical staff, to engage these young victims. It is during this moment of vulnerability, many are more able than ever to question what behaviour and choices that have led them here. With our specialist support, they feel able to pursue a change they may have not been able to before.

We focus on this moment and encourage and support young people in making healthy choices and positive plans to disrupt the cruel cycle of violence that can too easily lead to re-attendance, re injury and devastated communities. The youth work team are able to offer a compassionate presence at bedside to young victims as their medical needs are met. It is in this moment, when they are most vulnerable that they are receptive to receiving support; we call this the 'teachable moment'.

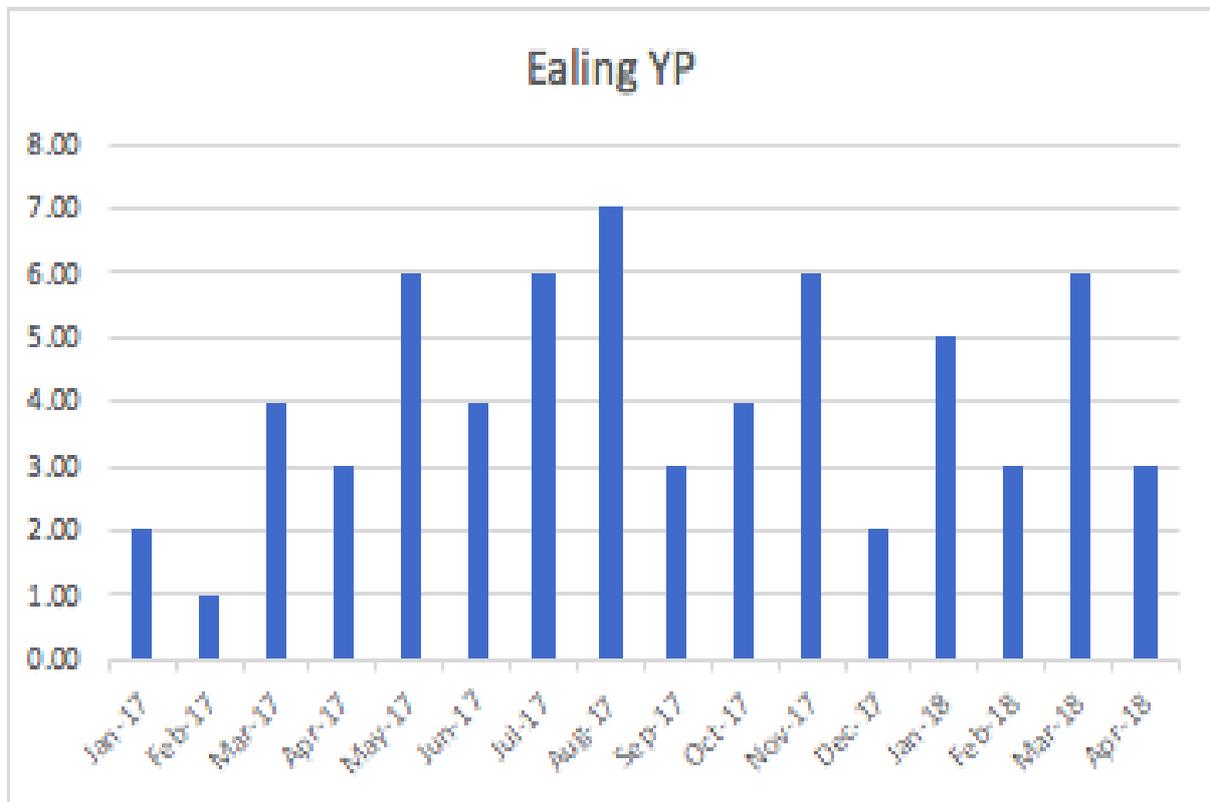
Establishing effective partnerships with our clinical colleagues is a vital part of what we do. Young people affected by serious youth violence can sometimes refuse treatment, be aggressive towards staff and self-discharge before they are medically fit to leave hospital. Whilst this behaviour might be frustrating for medical staff, it is also understandable given the traumatic experiences these young people have gone through. We try to act as intermediaries, hoping to facilitate better relationships between nurses, doctors and the young people they treat.

Statistics

Between April 2017 and April 2018, the majority (72%) of our eligible referrals into Redthread at St Mary's from the borough of Ealing attended A&E for stabbing injuries; a further 18% were referred for other serious assaults including blunt objects and bottles used as weapons. The remaining young people were referred due to other presentations such as illness (6% of eligible referrals; 4% of which were referred due to (C)SE concerns and 2% of which were affected by gang activity), deliberate self-harm (2% of eligible referrals, referred for gang affiliation) and accidental injuries (2% of eligible referrals, again referred for gang affiliation).

In the same period, 58% of eligible referrals from Ealing were for young people aged 18-24, whereas only 42% were aged 11-17; 86% of eligible referrals were for males, and just 14% of referrals were for females. Of the Ealing young people eligible for the YVIP service in the same time frame, 42% were admitted onto a ward at St Mary's and spent at least one night in hospital. When young people are admitted, we are able to do important work at the bedside, supporting young people throughout their time in hospital

and providing emotional and practical support. One of the most important facets of the role is helping the young people to understand and process the trauma they have experienced. We try to meet with every eligible young person whilst they are in hospital, and we also follow up with those who are discharged before we are able to meet with them.



People engaged in knife crime prevention (4)

Your Life You Choose

Your Life You Choose (YLYC) delivers a one-day multi-agency presentation to educate young people aged 11-12 about the consequences of crime, not only for the offender but their family and friends, victims and the wider community. It also helps young people to stay safe and know who they can turn to, if they need help.

The project is led by magistrates in the West London Justice Area and operated across boroughs in West London, North West London, and South East London. YLYC brings together a range of agencies which vary from borough to borough and they include magistrates, police – safer school's officers, Youth Justice Services, prison officers, ex-offenders, victims and victim support officers, paramedics, education consultation in cyberbullying and sexting, Drug Information services and the government 'PREVENT' initiative. All presenters are DBS checked by their own agency, or have equivalent safeguarding checks.

YLYC presents workshops to secondary schools, PRU's and EAP. In the London Borough of Ealing alone it delivered to just on 3,000 students. YLYC makes no charges to the schools or academies.

See the www.ylyc.org.uk website for further information.

A draft evaluation report for the Ealing area is attached at Appendix A

2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications in the report.

3. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for Ealing Council.

4. Other Implications

There are no other implications.

5. Background Papers

(This is a statutory requirement – please include the public documents referred to in writing the report, officer research and advice documents which Members or Members of the Public may request from the report author).

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Department	Date Sent to Consultee	Date Response Received from Consultee	Comments Appear in Report Para:
Internal				
Carolyn Fair	Director, Children and Families	24/08/2018		
Jess Murray	Head of Community Safety, Tenancies and Regulatory Operations	24/08/2018		
Mark Wiltshire	Director Safer Communities and Housing	24/08/2018		
Ian Jenkins	Head of Integrated Youth Service	24/08/2018		
Charles Barnard	Assistant Director, Integrated Early Years Preventative and Youth Services	24/08/2018		
Cllr Yvonne Johnson	Cabinet member for schools and children's services	24/08/2018		
Cllr Aysha Raza	Panel Chair	24/08/2018		
Cllr Seema Kumar	Panel Vice Chair	24/08/2018		

Report History

Decision Type: EITHER: Key Decision [state the date it was first entered into the Forward Plan OR Non-key Decision OR For Information (delete as applicable)	Urgency item? Yes/No (delete as applicable) [Yes if it is a general or special urgency key decision which was not included in the Forward Plan with at least one month's notice] If yes, set out the reasons both why the item was not included and a decision cannot be deferred.		
Authorised by Cabinet Member: XX.XX.XX	Date Report Drafted: 24/08/18	Report Deadline: 06/09/18	Date Report Sent: 06/09/18
Report No.:	Report Author and Contact for Queries: Ian Jenkins First and Surname, Job Title: Head of Integrated Youth Service Ext 8602		