

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Meeting	28 January 2021

YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN - TRANSITIONS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on the progress of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan theme area of Transitions.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of progress made on the theme of Transitions in order to provide scrutiny, challenge and support.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 No other alternative options to be considered.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

6.1 The Youth Justice Board (YJB) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Prison and Probation undertook an unannounced inspection of Blackpool Youth Justice Service in October 2018.

6.2 The findings of the inspection resulted in Blackpool Youth Justice Service receiving an inadequate rating. Prior to the inspection it had been recognised that improvements were needed both in the strategic partnership and the operational teams and a comprehensive Improvement Plan was put in place. The outcome of the inspection reinforced the need for pace and focused resource to support the change that was needed to improve the service and ensure that children are well supported across the partnership to achieve good outcomes.

- 6.3 The Improvement Plan focuses on five themes (in line with the Youth Justice Board's National Standards for Youth Justice) and each of the themes has a lead person from the partnership;
- Out of Court (Led by the Head of Criminal Justice, Lancashire Constabulary),
 - In Court (Led by Legal Team Manager, Blackpool Magistrates Court),
 - In the Community (Led by Service Manager Targeted Intervention Service, Blackpool Council),
 - In secure (Led by Business Development Manager, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children Safeguarding Assurance Partnership).
 - On Transitions and resettlement (Led by Education Inclusion lead and YOT Service Manager, Blackpool Council).

The Improvement Plan has been drawn up by the partnership and is monitored through the governance of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Executive Board.

- 6.4 Early in 2020, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) requested that all YOTs completed a self-assessment based on the updated Standards for Children in Youth Justice Services (2019). Five self-assessments were completed, one of which focused on Transitions. The transitions theme is a child first approach and focuses holistically on the variety of transitions a child may make. The YJB acknowledged that this was a new area for YOTs to develop and would require a substantial commitment from partner agencies to achieve progress and practice development. The YJB planned to undertake moderation and validation visit to authorities where needed. This month, January 2021, Blackpool Youth Justice Service have been notified that the YJB assessment team felt that Blackpool had given an honest National Standards assessment of Blackpool's improvement journey. The YJB acknowledged that Blackpool is now at the stage of implementing/adopting tools, systems and processes therefore no further action from the YJB is needed.
- 6.5 To inform the self-assessment our YOT Service Manager and Team Managers completed a number of audits alongside the Senior Probation Officer from the National Probation Service (NPS) as part of the standards for youth justice self-assessment. The audits evidenced some areas of good practice and identified areas which require improvement. A multi-agency partnership meeting was convened with colleagues from NPS, Health commissioning and provider services, Education, Children's Services and Housing to review the self-assessment and develop an action plan to look at the array of transitions which vulnerable children may encounter. This group continues to meet on a regular basis to review the initial plan and develop opportunities for practice improvements. The action plan is shared and reviewed by the YOT Executive Board on a bi-monthly basis.
- 6.6 Via the self-assessment and audits the following areas were acknowledged as requiring development and are contained in the themed action plan for the service and partners to develop:
- Service Level Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) needed to be reviewed with partners and updated. The pan-Lancashire MoU with NPS is being reviewed this month.
 - Elements of the transition and resettlement plan will be completed on a pan-Lancashire basis as NPS works across the whole of Lancashire. Developments will be agreed across the three local authority areas to ensure consistency of service provision.
 - It was evident that a child open to the YOT can make numerous transitions during their time with the service. Clearer guidance, practice procedures and training will be developed and delivered to ensure practitioners have a full understanding of these. A small working group comprising of the YOT Service Manager, Team Manager, lead practitioner and seconded

specialist workers will be developing a number process and practice guidance to ensure that changes in practice are implemented.

- A multi-agency audit at a strategic and practice level will be completed mid-2021 to measure strategic and practice improvement impact. Data will also be explored during the audit as a possible route to monitor transitions.
- The transition and resettlement theme has clear links to the improvements being completed around the *In Secure* theme. The theme leads in each area will ensure progress against actions is shared and that there is a joined up response to relevant sections.
- A recent audit focusing specifically on the transition from youth justice to probation has surfaced further development points and these will feed into the updated plan.

6.7 At the end of December 2020 the Council was informed, by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP), that Blackpool had been chosen to be part of a Northwest area pilot thematic inspection of youth to adult transitions across criminal justice agencies.

This inspection will set out to see what influences the decision to transition a young person and what a good transition looks like for them at the different stages; decision making, pre transition, during transition and post transition.

The inspection will be conducted remotely and will focus on:

- young people transitioning from YOTs to probation services subject to community orders
- young people transitioning from YOTs to probation services subject to the community element of a custodial sentence
- young people transitioning from YOTs to probation services as a result of committing a further offence
- young people remaining with the YOT and not transitioning to probation services

The start date of the inspection, originally January 2021, is due to be determined following a request to HMIP by the North West Association of Directors of Children’s Services to defer the inspection due to the timing of the announcement and the additional pressures faced by Local Authorities due to the COVID pandemic.

6.8 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The YOT partnership will fund the service in 2020/2021 through the budget outlined below:

AGENCY	STAFFING COSTS (£)	PAYMENTS IN KIND – REVENUE (£)	OTHER DELEGATED FUNDS (£)	TOTAL (£)
LOCAL AUTHORITY	129,051	-	-	129,051

POLICE SERVICE	43,674	-	41,941	85,615
NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE	40,000	-	5,000	45,000
CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP	39,974	-	15,444	55,418
POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER	-	-	-	-
YJB GOOD PRACTICE GRANT	327,141	-	4,499	331,640
OTHER	-	-	294, 535	294,535
TOTAL				941,259

There are no current budget pressures.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 There are no legal implications to consider

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are no issues of concern, appropriate governance arrangements are in place

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 In Blackpool young people from a white ethnic background accounted for 96% of all young people receiving a youth caution or court conviction. Those from a black ethnic background accounted for 1%, those from an Asian ethnic background for 0% and those from a mixed ethnic background for 3% (data from Executive Board September 2020).

It has been identified that Our Children, who are looked after, are disproportionality supported by our YOT service. A working party is established to consider the issues and take any relevant action.

We have identified as an area of development the need to ensure protected characteristics and diversity are specifically referenced and considered in our transition process.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 There are no sustainability, climate change or environmental factors to consider.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 The work in developing the in transitions and resettlement theme relies on working closely with internal and external colleagues. There is a regular multi-agency meeting in place, where partners will

be consulted and involved in service developments.

The service is strengthening its consultation and co-production approach with our young people and victims to support improved service delivery.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None