

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Vicky Gent, Director of Children's Services
Date of Meeting:	7 October 2021

YOUTH JUSTICE TEAM INSPECTION

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Committee on the progress of the Blackpool Youth Justice Service Improvement journey and the outcome of the recent Inspection.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

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

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure robust scrutiny of Youth Justice.

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

3.3 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:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

6.1 The Youth Justice Board (YJB) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Probation (HMIP) undertook an unannounced inspection of Blackpool Youth Justice Service in October 2018. The findings of the inspection resulted in Blackpool Youth Justice Service receiving an inadequate rating

(the Inspectorate uses a four-point scale: 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Requires improvement' and 'Inadequate'). A comprehensive Improvement Plan was drawn up by the partnership, whole scale changes were undertaken to ensure improvements were made and progress monitored through the governance of the Youth Justice Executive Board.

6.2 The Youth Justice Service was re-inspected by HMIP during May and June 2021 and the remarkable improvements were acknowledged. The service is now rated 'Good' and in three aspects 'Outstanding'. The Inspectorate worked jointly with partner inspectors from policing, health, social care and education to undertake this inspection. Three broad areas were examined: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts and the quality of out-of-court work (such as community sentences).

6.3 The Chief Inspector of Probation Justin Russell said: "Blackpool YJS has improved significantly since our 2018 inspection. The service has seen substantial reorganisation – it is now well organised, has effective scrutiny and clear direction. This has resulted in good quality work across all areas and is a significant achievement for the town and a credit to those involved."

Mr Russell continued: "We found that morale is high, and leaders and staff are motivated. When a youth justice service is so keen to develop, we see the quality improve. Some areas of their work were even rated 'Outstanding'. This is a considerable achievement: improving opportunities for children under supervision and reducing their chances of reoffending – this should not be underestimated."

Inspectors noted extensive improvements in key areas, such as the relationships between staff, children under supervision and their parents/carers. In addition, Blackpool YJS has reaffirmed partnerships with the police and secured better access for children to mental health services. There is clear planning for each child, proper analysis of their risk of harm, and a focus on getting children into education or vocational training.

Mr Russell concluded: "This a youth justice service heading in the right direction with the right priorities. The service has been overhauled, and they have a solid foundation to maintain this 'Good' standard. We have made a number of recommendations, and hope that our inspection will only provide the motivation to improve even further."

6.4 The improvements in the service have been driven from a stronger partnership of local services, better, more challenging oversight by the Executive Board and reinforced management of the service itself which has encouraged and supported improved practice; all of which has taken place in the wider context of greatly improved leadership of Children's Services in the Council and a profound shift in the approach to working with local children and families.

6.5 The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has commended the progress and in a letter to the Director of Children's Services stated: 'To be rated 'Good' with three areas of 'Outstanding' is an

incredible achievement and is a testament to the hard work, dedication and commitment by partners in Blackpool over the last couple of years to deliver better outcomes for children in Blackpool. We were particularly pleased to see the 'Outstanding' results in your Out of Courts Disposals work, knowing how hard you've worked as a partnership to improve outcomes in this area of practice. The inspection outcome also demonstrated how you and your team worked with the Executive Board to bring partners around the table to work collaboratively. This resulted in a significant improvement of governance with good evidence of both attendance and challenge by partners, which was crucial to the outcome of the inspection. Your dedication and hard work is having a significant impact, well done to all involved.'

6.6 Six recommendations were made by HMIP following the inspection to further improve the service:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to ensure they are meeting children's needs and reducing re-offending.
- Provide thorough and effective initial assessment of children's health and educational needs, including communication skills and dyslexia.
- Reduce the unacceptably high NEET (not in education, training or employment) rates for the over-16 caseload by getting more children into further education provision and vocational training, including access to services where children can gain the personal, life, and social skills they need to work towards employment.
- Ensure that, in all children's records, there is a plan to keep other people safe and contingency planning if issues in the child's life increase the likelihood of harmful behaviour.
- Where risk to the child's safety or wellbeing is identified, put in place clear contingency planning for circumstances where the risk may increase.
- Where risk to other people is identified, put in place clear contingency planning for circumstances where the risk may increase.

The recommendations have been incorporated into the revised Youth Justice improvement plan, with leads supporting each action, which has been returned to HMIP and will continued to be monitored by the service and bi-monthly via the Executive Board.

Both the Youth Justice Executive and Shadow Board have a Development Day in January 2022. The aim of the day will be for the multiagency partnership to refresh the Improvement Plan and linked Themed Plans to co-produce a new Getting to Outstanding Plan.

6.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 8(a) - Inspection Report.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The YOT partnership will fund the service in 2021/2022 through the budget outlined below:

Costs and Contributions 2021-2022 Budget

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Police	58,336		43,260	101,596
Probation	24,608		5,000	29,608
Health	39,974		15,444	55,418
Local Authority	369,681		156,806	526,487
YJB	392,663		54,251	446,914
Other				0
Total	885,262	-	274,761	1,160,023

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 The young people supported by the Blackpool Youth Justice Service in 2021/2022 were mainly white ethnic background (88 per cent), seven per cent of young people were mixed heritage and the remainder were a very small number of Eastern European and Vietnamese young people (data from Executive Board May 2021).

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 service continues to strengthen its consultation and co-production approach with our young people and victims to support improved service delivery.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.