

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Service
Date of Meeting:	27 January 2022

YOUTH JUSTICE TEAM INSPECTION

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Committee on the progress of Blackpool's Youth Justice Service improvement journey.

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 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:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

6.1 The Youth Justice Service (YJS) was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) during May and June 2021. The service was 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).

- 6.2 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.'
- 6.3 Youth Justice Minister Victoria Atkins also commended the service via letter in October 2021 and stated 'I was particularly impressed with the substantial improvement to the out-of-court disposal process. It is great to see that the joint working that underpins the delivery of out-of-court disposals has been exemplary. I was also pleased to hear about the improved quality of work to address desistance through court disposals.' MP Atkins also commented that 'it is particularly impressive that the YOS has significantly improved under such challenging circumstances. I am aware that, as HMIP noted in their report, nowhere else in the country has an equivalent concentration or extent of poverty and deprivation as Blackpool and that in the year preceding the report Blackpool had been free from Covid-19 restrictions for just six weeks. I congratulate you on the improved delivery of services to vulnerable children and young people in the face of adversity.'
- 6.4 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.

6.5 Progress on the above HMIP recommendations have commenced which include:

- YJS Practitioners have transitioned to a new model of recording (the ACORN model - Aim, Content, Outcome, Risk, Next steps) for all interventions with children to ensure clear and consistent delivery of interventions based on identified need. YJS Practitioners have begun to use the My Target Plan format with children to further enhance the effectiveness of the YJS interventions.
- At the end of 2021 a series of audits were undertaken and learning circles held with YJS practitioners to further embed the use of ACORNs, My Target Plan and enhance contingency planning arrangements for children's plans. YJS Team Managers are providing ongoing support to Practitioners to further refine contingency planning for all children.
- The YJS Education, Employment and Training practitioner along with a YJS Team Manager are linking with four local YJS (Knowsley, Wigan, Stockport and Salford) who have been identified by HMIP as high performing in engaging children who are NEET and supporting them in achieving a positive destination. The aim of the visit will be to find out what, if anything, they are doing differently to Blackpool YJS so that we can look to emulate where we can.
- In addition the YJS Education, Employment and Training practitioner is being supported to create a bespoke package of intervention to support children who are not yet ready to engage with Education, Employment and Training. The interventions will support personal, life and social skills in order to develop children's self-esteem, confidence and motivation.

6.6 The HMIP recommendations have been incorporated into the revised Youth Justice improvement plan, with leads on supporting each action and which has been returned to HMIP. The plan will continued to be monitored by the service and bi-monthly via the Executive Board. The Youth Justice Executive and Shadow Board have a Development Day on 26 January 2022. The aim of the day is to further strengthen our partnership and problem solving in order to achieve consistently great outcomes for all our children and create a 2022 development plan that gets the YJS to Outstanding.

6.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 6(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 young people and victims to support improved service delivery.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.