

# Cabinet

## 20 June 2023

### Youth Justice Service Inspection

#### For Review and Consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr B Quayle, Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):**

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

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**Report Status:** Public

#### Brief Summary:

HMI Probation led a Joint Inspection of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service in September and October 2022. The inspection report was published on 17 January 2023. The overall rating of the service was Good. The inspection report provides a thorough review of the work of the service, applying 13 inspection standards. 11 of the 13 standards were rated Good, one was rated Requires Improvement and one was rated Outstanding.

#### Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the findings of the inspection report, including the 'Recommendations', 'Strengths' and 'Areas for Improvement' identified by the inspectors, and are assured that an action plan is in place, with suitable monitoring, to address the inspection report's Recommendations.

#### Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure the committee has oversight of the inspection report and is assured that an action plan is in place to address the report's Recommendations.

## 1. Report

- 1.1 HMI Probation have responsibility for the inspection of youth justice services. All youth justice services in England and Wales are being inspected in a programme that will run from 2018-2024. The current youth justice inspection framework provides for two types of inspection, 'single' or 'joint'. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was the subject of a joint inspection in September and October 2022. The joint inspection format requires the submission of evidence in advance; a fieldwork week during which HMI Probation inspect a sample of YJS casework; a second fieldwork week in which YJS staff and partners meet with a multi-agency inspection team comprising specialist inspectors for youth justice, children's social care, education, police and health. The report from this joint inspection was published on 17 January 2023.
- 1.2 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is a partnership between Dorset Council, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Dorset Police, NHS Dorset and the Probation Service in Dorset. The inspection covered work in both local authority areas and reported on the combined work of the service so that the findings apply to both local authority areas.
- 1.3 The inspectors found that "children from the two local authorities covered by the YJS – Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole (BCP) and Dorset – have access to quality resources based upon their needs and these are not restricted by locality". In terms of the direct work of the YJS, the inspectors commented that "staff encourage good engagement with the child. Staff and managers are child-centred and know their children well".
- 1.4 The inspection report is appended to this report (Appendix 1). The youth justice inspection framework is structured into 4 'domains': Organisational Delivery; Court Disposals; Out of Court Disposals; Resettlement. Each domain is divided into Standards, making a total of 13 inspection Standards.
- 1.5 Inspection of the first domain, Organisational Delivery, is undertaken through a combination of 'evidence in advance' and fieldwork meetings with YJS staff, managers, Board members and partners. All four inspection Standards in this domain were rated Good. Committee members will see that the report lists the Strengths and Areas for Improvement identified by the inspectors for each Standard.

- 1.6 As part of the inspection HMI Probation sent a text survey to all children on the current YJS caseload and asked to interview children whose cases were included in the inspection sample. Surveys were also sent to YJS team members, YJS volunteers and to the local youth magistrates.
- 1.7 Inspection of the other three domains (Court Disposals, Out of Court Disposals and Resettlement) is undertaken through detailed scrutiny of a sample of cases. The YJS was required to submit details of all cases commencing between 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022. From this list the inspectorate selected a total of 62 cases (24 court orders, 35 out of court disposals, 3 custody cases). Inspectors applied a structured set of inspection criteria to each case, reading the case record and interviewing the lead YJS worker.
- 1.8 Committee members will see in the report that seven of the nine casework standards were rated Good, one was rated Requires Improvement and one was rated Outstanding.
- 1.9 HMI Probation made six Recommendations in their report. Four of the Recommendations are addressed to the YJS Management Board, covering some of the Board arrangements, local partnership work in response to child exploitation, education for YJS children and some of the partnership working between the YJS and children's social care. The other two Recommendations are addressed to the YJS Manager, relating to the analysis of the outcomes for different types of out of court disposal and to the quality of assessments of the risk of harm posed by children on the YJS caseload.
- 1.10 HMI Probation required an action plan to be submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> February, showing how the YJS will address the inspection recommendations. The action plan was submitted on time and has now been approved by HMI Probation. This is provided as Appendix 2. The YJS Management Board will oversee progress on implementing the plan. Progress can also be reported to the People and Health Overview committee in June when the committee is due to consider the annual Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24.

## 2. **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with the inspection report.

## 3. **Environmental Implications**

No environmental impact has been identified in respect of the inspection report.

#### **4. Well-being and Health Implications**

No specific health implications have been identified in the inspection report. The report notes the strong partnership working with health commissioners and providers in Dorset and the quality of work undertaken by the YJS nurses, psychologist and speech and language therapists.

#### **5. Other Implications**

No other implications have been identified in respect of the inspection outcome.

#### **6. Risk Assessment**

6.1 Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

#### **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

7.1 There are no specific equality implications associated with the report. One of the suggested Areas for Improvement is for the service to develop a discrete diversity and disproportionality policy which will guide staff to ask appropriate questions about a child's heritage and their lived experiences.

#### **8. Appendices**

Appendix 1: "An inspection of youth offending services in Dorset".

Appendix 2: Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Inspection Action Plan

#### **9. Background Papers**

N/A