

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 9 th September 2024
Report Subject	Flintshire Youth Justice Service HMIP Inspection
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Flintshire Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a multiagency statutory partnership established in April 2000, further to the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The chief aim of the Flintshire YJS is to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people aged 10-17 years in Flintshire. The Youth Justice Service has a statutory obligation under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to develop an annual Youth Justice Plan which outlines its priorities for the forthcoming year in addition to reporting on governance, resources accountability and performance.

HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the independent inspector of youth justice and probation services in England and Wales. HMIP report on the effectiveness of probation and youth justice service work with adults and children. As part of their cycle of routine inspections, HMIP inspected Flintshire Youth Justice Service in March 2024. Their full report and findings were published in July 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members note the recommendations from the HMIP Inspection Report and are assured of the quality of provision of the Flintshire Youth Justice Service.
2.	That members endorse a robust approach to seeking the identified support that is currently identified as lacking from external partners.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	THE YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE
1.01	The Flintshire Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a multiagency statutory partnership established in April 2000, further to the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The chief aim of the Flintshire YJS is to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people aged 10-17 years in Flintshire.
1.02	HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the independent inspector of youth justice and probation services in England and Wales. HMIP report on the effectiveness of probation and youth justice service work with adults and children. As part of their cycle of routine inspections, HMIP inspected Flintshire Youth Justice Service in March 2024. Their full report and findings were published in July 2024.
1.03	<p>The Youth Justice Service was inspected under the following domains;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisational delivery• Court Disposals• Out of Court Disposals• Resettlement <p>The HMIP Inspection team were provided with evidence in advance by the Youth Justice Service prior to HMIP undertaking fieldwork. Fieldwork was undertaken from 11th March to 15th March and consisted of a review of local policies and procedures, management board and partnership data, interviews with key stakeholders including partners, children and young people, Youth Justice Service staff and Management Board Members. The Inspectorate also reviewed the casework of 16 children and young people.</p>
1.04	Each domain has a number of components which are assessed. With respect to case related domains (Court Disposals, Out of Court Disposals and Resettlement) the methodology applied is that the rating for these standards are driven by the lowest score on each of the questions / components. Ratings are applied to each from Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate.
1.05	HMIP also apply and overall ratings to the service and based on their findings Flintshire was awarded a 'Good' rating overall.
1.06	The Youth Justice Services' overall governance and leadership was seen as good and was commended for the creation of a distinctive Youth Justice Service which had succeeded in raising the profile of the service. The overall vision of the service towards becoming a trauma informed service was seen as a particular strength. HMIP found that the service was well represented across strategic and operational partnerships. The Inspectorate found that the Management Board led by the Chief Executive was effective in providing governance and scrutiny of the service and that the YJS provided good quality information and data to the Board and partners which included hearing the views of children, young people and victims.

1.07	<p>Our staff and wider workforce were identified as a particular strength who are embedding a trauma informed approach and are provided with support from managers. HMIP identified that there are succession, development and training frameworks in place and staff are supported to make use of such opportunities in development. The YJS staff are also involved with the Management Board and governance arrangements and are provided with regular updates and learning from case file audits and performance data is regularly shared. Our staff were commended in their approaches to encourage good engagement with children and promote a child-centred approach. HMIP identified that the staff and managers knew their children well and are advocates for their needs. However, it was identified that our staff were also filling the gaps of other services.</p>
1.08	<p>The inspection identified that the service had a good partnership footprint and was well represented at strategic and operational forums. Our work with Public Health Wales ACE Hub and academic institutions was consistently highlighted as good practice. It was also acknowledged that the service had a number of additional services to address complex needs within the cohort. HMIP found good relationships with Education, Social Services for Children, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), North Wales Police (NWP) and Flintshire Sorted. Moreover, the support that the service provides for victims was a strength and that staff ensured that victims views were heard and that they feel supported whilst integrating both victims and children into their communities.</p>
1.09	<p>With respect to Casework, inspectors found that approaches to assessment in out of court or court cases were assessed as either outstanding or good. Case Managers identified risks, safety and wellbeing appropriately and made good use of information from partner agencies. Analysis of offending behaviour and desistence was good and assessments were conducted with an awareness of trauma informed practice. Children, parents or carers were actively included in assessments and there was a focus on building on strengths and motivation. HMIP identified some improvements were required to improve consistency in utilising information to analyse risk of serious harm to others.</p>
1.10	<p>In out of court and court domains some approaches to planning were identified as requiring improvements. Whilst HMIP found clear evidence that plans were being co-produced with children, that YJS Practitioners knew children well and that planning promoted safety and wellbeing, the Inspectorate assessed that plans also needed to take consideration of integrating other services. Since the inspection the service has worked with practitioners and managers to strengthen our approaches to planning. Inspectors also identified that management oversight was not always applied consistently. We have since amended our approaches to quality assurance.</p>
1.11	<p>The Youth Justice Service has a well established out of court panel or 'Bureau'. This panel review assessments and agree out of court disposals for children and young people and there was evidence of joint decision making between the Youth Justice Service and the Police. The service also has clear scrutiny provisions in place with North Wales Police with support of a local Magistrate. A specific area for improvement for the</p>

	Bureau is to expand multi-agency representation to include Social Services for Children and the Case Manager assessing the child or young person. Since the inspection we have commenced a regional review of our Out of Court processes and established a working group with North Wales Police and all North Wales Youth Justice Services.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>HMIP made a number of formal recommendations for our strategic partners linked to the provision of resources. Probation have not met statutory duties and the service has been without a Probation secondment for 2 years. However, it should be noted that in lieu of a seconded resource Probation do provide a financial contribution for 50% of a Youth Justice Officer who support Youth to Adult Transitions. This has ensured that transitions from the Youth Justice Service to Probation have been unaffected.</p> <p>Meetings have taken place between the Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Education and Youth with the Local Delivery Head for Probation, to seek a resolution to current secondment arrangements, however, due to significant resourcing pressures within Probation including vacancies and demands within the secure estate it is unlikely that Probation will be in a position to second a resource to YJS in the near future. The Chief Executive has requested that Probation Senior Leaders engage with HMIP and Ministry of Justice.</p>
2.02	<p>HMIP placed some recommendations against health care providers. Firstly, a recommendation was made to ensure health care provision for YJS children meets their emotional health and wellbeing needs. Whilst the service has a CAMHS Practitioner seconded into the service, work had commenced prior to the inspection between YJS and Health to increase resourcing into the YJS as part of a local health review to expand resources to support children with their emotional and wellbeing needs.</p>
2.03	<p>Further recommendations were placed against health care providers to ensure children supervised by the YJS are assessed for and have access to services that meet their speech, language and communication needs. This recommendation mirrors a report written by the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee which also made recommendations for speech and language resources into Youth Justice. However, the current position of the Welsh Government is that such resourcing decisions are the responsibility of the local Health Board. As such, the Chief Executive has written to the Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board to engage in further discussions. However, it should be noted that unlike probation, there is no statutory requirement for the provision of Speech and Language resources into Youth Justice Services.</p>
2.04	<p>To improve multi-agency representation at our Out of Court Panel or Bureau, Social Services for Children have subsequently identified a resource who can support our decision making panel.</p>

2.05	The inspectorate also suggested that the Youth Justice Service needed to review our current education resource within the service to enable seconded staff to undertake more direct work with children. We have subsequently commenced a review of this resource and are exploring opportunities to reduce the administrative function of the resource to enable more time to undertake direct work.
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
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3.01	The full report and recommendations have been shared with the YJS Management Board and partners and we have commenced a number of discussions with our partners in Health, Probation and North Wales Police to further the recommendations. A formal Improvement Plan has been devised and submitted to HMIP. We will continue to monitor the progress of this Improvement Plan through our Management Board.
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	<p>Progress against our HMIP Improvement Plan will be monitored by the Youth Justice Service Executive Management Board which meets quarterly. There are a number of risks that may impact on progressing recommendations identified including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant resourcing challenges in partner agencies which may prevent the use of secondments or additional resources, • Lack of clarity around Youth Justice funding via our Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice Grant for 2024-25 which has yet to be received. The absence of timely notification of our grant has become an established practice despite attempts by the Chief Executive to raise these issues directly with the YJB and Ministry of Justice. • Current workload pressures within YJS linked to staffing absences may delay some operational improvements.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	N/A
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	HMIP (2024) An inspection of Youth Justice Services in Flintshire https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/flintshire/2024/
6.02	Welsh Parliament Equality and Social Justice Committee (2023) '60% Giving them a voice; Speech, language and communication needs in the youth justice system' https://senedd.wales/media/excbag12/cr-ld15786-e.pdf

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: James Warr, Senior Manager, Flintshire Youth Justice Service & Flintshire Sorted</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 701125</p> <p>E-mail: james.warr@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>ACEs- Adverse Childhood Experiences are traumatic events that affect children while growing up, such as suffering child maltreatment or living in a household affected by domestic violence, substance misuse or mental illness.</p> <p>AYM – Association of YOT Managers, a body that represents Youth Justice Managers in England.</p> <p>Bureau - Framework for diverting young people out of formal Youth Justice processes by tackling underlying causes of youth crime through mechanisms that promote pro-social behaviours, children’s rights, youth and parent/carer participation and delivered by universal services.</p> <p>CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</p> <p>FTE - First time entrants to the service</p> <p>HMIP- His Majesty’s Inspectorate Probation</p> <p>KPI – Key Performance Indicators – Statutory indicators required by the Youth Justice Board</p> <p>Outcome 22 – Police Out of Court disposal which allows a no further action to be recorded against a lower level offence where the child or young person has voluntarily engaged in intervention with the YJS.</p> <p>YJSIP – Youth Justice Sector Improvement Partnership – Sector Professional Body in collaboration with Youth Justice Board and Association of YOT Managers.</p>