

**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

20 November 2020



**County Durham Youth Justice Service,
Annual Performance Report 2019/20 and
Service Improvement Plan 2020/21**

Report of:

**John Pearce, Corporate Director, Children and Young People's
Services**

**Councillor Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and
Young People's Services**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report presents an Annual Performance Report for 2019/20 for information and comment. It highlights key achievements during the year, along with areas for improvement which the service will be focussed upon during the next year alongside work to recover from the coronavirus outbreak and its impact on the youth justice system.

Executive Summary

- 2 Normally, the production of a Youth Justice Plan is a statutory requirement of the local authority under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and is one of the requirements of the YJB grant for YOTs. However, as a result of Covid19 restrictions, the YJB decided to remove the requirement for a statutory plan for this year and instead has asked for a brief improvement plan and recovery plan which was submitted on 4 September 2020. CDYJS Management Board has continued to meet virtually and requested an annual performance report, in addition to the Service Improvement Plan to fulfil this request and give the Board oversight.

- 3 In the case of County Durham Youth Justice Service, we had already produced a plan in 2019, covering the period 2019 – 2021 and this was approved via the council's cabinet and full council and taken through Safe Durham Partnership and Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4 Key points about performance during 2019/20 show that there were further significant falls in first time entrants to the youth justice system and a very low level for use of custody. There is some questioning with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) regarding the accuracy of performance data for re-offending figures for the period reported from 2017/18 and correspondence is in place with the MOJ regarding this. There is a significant amount of work underway with victims including young victims.
- 5 Due to amended priorities for the MoJ, as a result of Government Covid19 information requirements, the provision of performance information stopped in February 2020. The data provided is the latest available data.
- 6 Service improvement priorities for 2020/21 are:
 - (a) Improving the interventions we complete with young people;
 - (b) Improving the quality of our assessments and intervention plans;
 - (c) Targeting our resources on those young people committing the most offences;
 - (d) Ensuring we listen and respond to what young people and their families are telling us;
 - (e) Continue to improve our service to victims – both adults and young people;
 - (f) Ensuring volunteering, by both adults and young people, is a key component of the work we undertake with young people and victims;
 - (g) Ensuring that case management systems and administration support provide the highest quality support to staff and managers in the delivery of services to courts, communities and young people.

Recommendation(s)

- 7 The Safer & Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:
 - (i) Note the contents of this report
 - (ii) Receive the CDYJS Annual Performance Report 2019/20 and Service Improvement Plan for the period 2020/21

Background

- 8 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are statutory partnerships, established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, with the principal aim of preventing offending by children and young people. Local Authorities are responsible for establishing a 'Youth Offending Team'. Police, National Probation Service (NPS) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are statutorily required to assist in their funding and operation. In Durham last year we took the opportunity to rename the service to become County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS).
- 9 Local authorities continue to have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth offending partnership's responsibilities in producing this plan. However, due to Covid19 restrictions, the Youth Justice Board removed the requirement to produce a Youth Justice Plan for the year 2020/21. In the case of CDYJS, we had already produced a plan in 2019, covering the period 2019 – 2021. The CDYJS Management Board, therefore, requested the production of an Annual Performance Report 2019/20 and the development of a Service Improvement Plan 2020/21 to meet the Youth Justice Board's request and give the board ongoing oversight of work.

CDYJS Annual Performance Report 2019/20 and Service Improvement Plan 2020/21

- 10 A copy of the report is attached as Appendix 2

Key Achievements 2019/20

(a) Performance against National Outcome Measures 2019/20

- **First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System (FTEs):**

Between October 2018 and September 2019, the rate of FTEs per 100,000 10-17 years population in County Durham is **213**, a 14.6% reduction on the previous year.

This is a pleasing further reduction and is lower than the national rate of 219 and is significantly lower than the North East rate of 299.

- **Re-offending information for the latest cohort tracked**

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) data (April 2017 – March 2018 cohort) shows a re-offending rate of **51.9%**. This is higher than the both the National rate of 38.4% and the North East rate of 41.8%.

Given the consistently reducing size of the cohort of young people entering the youth justice system, the reoffending figure can vary considerably when compared to previous years.

The Service has concerns about this data and is currently corresponding with the MoJ in respect of the accuracy of the data and if the correct cohort of young people are in the data set over the period reported.

- **Use of Custody**

Custodial Sentences:

The CDYJS performance during January – December 2019 showed a rate per 1,000 10-17 years of **0.09**, a reduction of 75% on the previous year. This is lower than both the National and North East with rates of 0.19 and 0.16 respectively. On each occasion a young person is sentenced to custody, the work of CDYJS is reviewed to ensure all appropriate work was undertaken.

Remand Bed Nights: 295

This is a 56.6% reduction on the previous year. There was also a reduction in both the number of young people being remanded to youth detention accommodation and the number of episodes when compared to the previous year – 11 to 4 young people and 13 to 4 episodes.

- **Work with Victims, including Young Victims:**

For the period 1.4.19 – 31.3.20, our work with the victims of youth crime has engaged over **100** victims in restorative approaches. Our work with young people who are the victims of youth crime has provided dedicated support and an opportunity to re-build and restore confidence. The support group for young victims of all crime ('With Youth in Mind') has continued to develop and is now working with an average of **30** young people at any one time throughout the year (annual total of **57** young people). Young people who offend have also engaged in almost **1,500** hours of unpaid work in and across communities in County Durham as a means of reparation.

Sales of the items made by young people (Xmas Wreaths, Garden Planters etc) as part of their reparation, enabled us to donate **£1,000** to the Great North Air Ambulance and North East Autism Society – charities chosen by the young people themselves.

- 10 Along with all services of the Local Authority, CDYJS amended its service delivery methods in reaction to the demands of lockdown. The Annual Report details the changes we implemented to manage the service; and our plans to learn the lessons of lockdown and carry forward those activities that are shown to be beneficial for the long term.
- 11 The Service Improvement Plan outlines how CDYJS will:
- Reduce First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System;
 - Reduce re-offending by young people;
 - Reduce the use of custody for both sentenced and remanded young people.

We are seeking to do this through:

- Improving the interventions we complete with young people;
- Improving the quality of our assessments and intervention plans;
- Targeting our resources on those young people committing the most offences;
- Ensuring we listen and respond to what young people and their families are telling us;
- Continue to improve our service to victims – both adults and young people;
- Ensuring volunteering, by both adults and young people, is a key component of the work we undertake with young people and victims;
- Ensuring that case management systems and administration support provide the highest quality support to staff and managers in the delivery of services to courts, communities and young people.

Background papers

- CDYJS Youth Justice Plan 2019/21

Contact: Dave Summers, YJS Manager Tel: 03000 265999

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

The pooled budget for the Youth Justice Service 2020/21 has been approved by the CDYJS Management Board.

Consultation

CDYJS Management Board, partners, staff, young people, parents/carers have all been consulted in developing the service improvement plan.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

CDYJS is committed to meeting the needs of the young people, families and victims with whom we work. All staff have undertaken specialist diversity training for youth offending, speech language and communication needs training and, in addition, case managers have undertaken specialist diversity training for assessments. Diversity issues are a specific category on the checklist used by managers to countersign assessments and intervention plans.

Human Rights

Not Applicable

Crime and Disorder

The statutory function of CDYJS partnership is the prevention of offending by children and young people (Crime and Disorder Act 1998). The Service Improvement Plan provides detail on how the partnership will improve those functions.

Staffing

None

Accommodation

All managers and staff in CDYOS have their main base in DCC, Crook.

Risk

Risks to future delivery have been considered. Due to Covid19 restrictions, separate Business Continuity and Business Recovery Plans are available.

Procurement

Not applicable