

Full Council

14 July 2021

County Durham Youth Justice Plan
2021 – 2022



Ordinary Decision

Report of Corporate Management Team

John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children & Young People's Services

Councillor Ted Henderson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Service

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report presents the Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 for information and comment and highlights some of the key achievements in reducing re-offending during 2020/21 along with areas for improvement which the service will focus on during the next year.

Executive summary

- 2 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 Youth Justice Board (YJB) grant we receive. The plan had to be submitted to the YJB by 30 June 2021 and it provided detailed guidance on the headings within the plan and the areas to be covered within each heading which we have followed. Essentially, the plan is in two parts. Firstly, a review of performance and activity for 2020-2021 and secondly, improvement plans, staffing and budgets for 2021-2022.

Key Achievements 2020/21

Performance against National Outcome Measures 2020/21:

- 3 Please note that the data for the national outcome measures is produced by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and for both First Time

Entrants (FTEs) and Re-offending is based on data taken from the Police National Computer (PNC). Due to revised priorities at the MoJ as a result of the Covid19 pandemic, PNC data has not been available and therefore the figures are more historical than would otherwise be the case.

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

Between January and December 2019, the rate of FTEs per 100,000 10-17 years population in County Durham was 179, which is lower than both the England rate (208) and that of the North East Region as a whole (274).

(b) **Re-offending**

MoJ data (Cohort derived January to December 2018) shows a re-offending rate of 39.2% which is a reduction of 10.6 percentage points compared to the previous year (49.8%). This rate is marginally higher than both the National and North East rate of 38.4% but shows a much greater rate of improvement.

(c) **Use of Custody**

Custodial Sentences:

County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS) performance has seen a big reduction in the last two years compared with previous years with a rate 0.18 per 1,000 10-17 year olds during January–December 2020 (compared with 0.42 in 2018). This is marginally higher than both the National and North East averages with rates of 0.14 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: 92

This is a 69% reduction on the previous year (295 nights). The 92 nights relates to just 4 young people, all of whom ultimately resulted in custodial sentences.

Work with Victims, including Young Victims

- 4 Our work with victims of youth crime in 2020/21 has engaged a further 137 victims (both adults and young people) 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 around 35 young people at any one time throughout the year. Young people who offend have also engaged in 1,366 hours of unpaid work in and across communities in County Durham as a means of reparation.

Targeting those young people committing the most offences

- 5 The service has continued to prioritise our work with young people who are persistently offending. The Service operates an enhanced, intensive, case management model for this cohort of young people. Each case is reviewed monthly by a panel chaired by the YJS Manager. The service has developed, in conjunction with CAMHS & CYPS, a trauma recovery model of enhanced case management for this cohort of young people. Monitoring of this work has continued to show that whilst significant reductions in offending are sometimes difficult to achieve, it is possible to have a meaningful impact in reducing both the frequency and seriousness of offending.

Covid-19 Pandemic

- 6 Like all services, CDYJS has operated under the national requirements of lockdown because of the Covid19 pandemic. As a result of this, we developed new operating procedures and monitoring arrangements, based on the level of risk presented by young people (both harm to others and vulnerability), to take account of lockdown and social distancing. From March 2020, we operated with the strategic approach of 'we will undertake all the same things as before. How we do them will be different'. This ensured that we carried out our role safely, for young people, families, communities and staff, and continued to undertake our full range of statutory duties.

Recommendation(s)

- 7 Full Council is recommended to:
 - (a) note the contents of this report;
 - (b) receive the Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 and performance summary for the period 2020/21.

Background

- 8 Youth Offending Teams (referred to, in County Durham as ‘Youth Justice Service’) 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, the Probation Service and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are statutorily required to assist in their funding and operation.
- 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. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out:
 - (a) how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded;
 - (b) how the YOS will be composed and funded, how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out.
- 10 This current plan covers performance for the period 2020/21 and provides service budgets, operational and strategic developments within the service and partnership, service structure and the Service Improvement Plan for 2021 – 2022.
- 11 In accordance with statutory requirements, the plan was placed before CDYJS Management Board on 21 June 2021 where it was approved.
- 12 The Youth Justice Plan must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State. The deadline for submission this year was 30 June 2021. After submission to the YJB, Youth Justice Plans are sent to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP - lead for YOS inspections) and are placed in the House of Commons library.

Youth Justice Plan 2021 - 2022

- 13 A copy of the updated Youth Justice Plan is attached as Appendix 2.
- 14 The 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.

15 We are seeking to do this through:

- (a) improving the interventions we complete with young people;
- (b) improving the quality of our assessments and plans;
- (c) targeting our resources on those young people committing the most offences;
- (d) ensuring that we listen and respond to what young people and their families are telling us;
- (e) continuing to improve our work with victims – both adults and young people;
- (f) ensuring that volunteering, by both adults and young people, is a key component of the work we do with young people and victims;
- (g) ensuring that case management systems and administration support provides the highest quality support to staff and managers in the delivery of services to courts, communities, victims, families and young people.

16 HMI Probation is currently three years into a five-year inspection cycle. CDYJS and partnership are yet to be inspected under the current cycle. An updated inspection framework for Youth Offending Services was published in May 2021, which sets clear standards expected of YOTs, to ensure the provision of a high quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people. Whilst there are many aspects of good performance contained within the current plan, the service is not complacent and is fully aware of the areas where practice needs to change, and performance improve. We are also mindful of the impact of COVID on our services, partner agencies, young people and families. We have completed a robust, detailed self-assessment against the published inspection standards. This work has informed our ongoing quality improvement plans and the Service Improvement Plan for 2021/22.

Background papers

- None.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Youth Justice Plan ensures Durham County Council and statutory partners meet their legal implications to the partnership. Statutory requirements placed on the YOS and the Management Board include: complying with the statutory requirements laid out in s.38 to 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and other relevant sections of the Act; complying with National Standards for Youth Justice (including returning the annual National Standards audit); submitting required data to the YJB in adherence with the relevant YJB data recording guidance and approving the annual Youth Justice Plan.

Finance

The Youth Justice Plan contains CDYJS partnership pooled budget and staff secondment arrangements for 2021/22. CDYJS budget comprises partnership funding, YJB funding and specific grant funding. The budget allocation is reviewed annually by CDYJS Management Board and all partners (Police, Probation, Health (CCGs) and Local Authority) agree funding contributions for the following year. Under the terms of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998; DCC, Durham Constabulary, the Probation Service and CCGs are required to both contribute staff and provide funding for a pooled budget for operating costs. The total budget for CDYJS for 2021/22 is £2,860,870. The total budget for CDYJS includes the cost of staff seconded/deployed to CDYJS from partners.

Consultation

CDYJS Management Board, partners, staff, young people and parents/carers have been consulted in updating the Youth Justice Plan. The new portfolio holder for CYPS is a co-signatory of the plan and has been briefed on the related inspection requirements for this service area.

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.

Climate Change

None.

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 Youth Justice Plan provides detail on how the partnership will undertake those functions.

Staffing

Staff establishment is included in the plan, in line with YJB requirements.

Accommodation

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

Risk

Risks to future delivery have been considered and are included in the plan.

Procurement

Not applicable.