

9 September 2021



**County Durham Youth Justice Service –
Overview, Performance and Service
Improvement Plan 2021/22**

Report of:

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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report presents an overview of the Youth Justice Service, including the latest Service/Partnership performance. It highlights key achievements during the previous year, along with areas for improvement which the service will be focussed upon during the next year alongside our ongoing work to recover from the coronavirus outbreak and its impact on the youth justice system.

Executive Summary

- 2 Youth Offending Services (referred to as Youth Justice Service in Durham) 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'. The Local Authority, Police, National Probation Service (NPS) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are statutorily required to assist in their funding and operation (through the secondment of staff). In Durham, additional, non-statutory, funding/support is provided by the Police & Crime Commissioner and Public Health.
- 3 The role of the Youth Justice Service is to:
 - Assess the suitability of, and provide relevant interventions for, young people receiving an 'Out-of-Court Disposal' (Pre-Caution Disposal, Youth Caution & Conditional Caution)
 - Case-manage young people remanded on bail and in custody whilst awaiting court hearings

- Advise the court on sentencing
 - Assess all young people sentenced by the court, manage the sentence and provide relevant interventions to prevent offending
 - Provide support to the families of young people who offend
 - Support all victims (young and adult) of youth crime and support young victims of all crime.
- 4 Key points about our current performance show that there were continued falls in first time entrants to the youth justice system and a low level for use of custody. The latest reoffending rate for young people (those who reoffend within 12 months of their last caution/sentence) shows Durham to be lower than the north east average and on a par with the national average.
- 5 As well as the performance covered above, during 2020/21 key achievements were:
- Working with 137 victims in restorative approaches
 - Young people who offend undertaking 1,366 hours of unpaid work in communities
 - Supporting 67 young victims of crime
 - Continuing full service delivery throughout all Covid lockdowns
 - Supporting 52 parents of young people who offend and receiving a C&YP Now national Award for our parent support programme
 - Working with 43 community volunteers to provide support and mentoring for young people and families
- 6 Service improvement priorities for 2021/22 are:
- (a) Further improving the interventions we complete with young people and the quality of our assessments and intervention plans;
 - (b) Targeting our resources on those young people committing the most offences;
 - (c) Ensuring we listen and respond to what young people and their families are telling us;
 - (d) Continue to improve our service to victims – both adults and young people;

- (e) Ensuring volunteering, by both adults and young people, is a key component of the work we undertake with young people and victims;
- (f) 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 and comment on the contents of this report and the work of the service

Background

- 8 A briefing document on CDYJS is provided at **Appendix 2**. County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS), a statutory multi-agency partnership, is part of Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council, and is managed by them on behalf of the partnership. Active links are maintained at both strategic and operational level to Criminal Justice, Community Safety and Children, Young People and Families arenas.
- 9 CDYJS is accountable to a multi-agency Management Board, chaired by the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children, Durham County Council. The membership and terms of reference of the Management Board are reviewed annually. Membership is at appropriate Senior Officer level.
- 10 CDYJS is line-managed, on behalf of the partnership, by Durham County Council. The Service is part of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children Service (EHIVCS).
- 11 62 staff are employed by Durham County Council on behalf of the partnership and 12 full time equivalent staff are seconded/deployed from partners (Durham Constabulary, National Probation Service, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT), Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT), Tees Esk and Wear Valleys Mental Health Trust (TEWV) and Humankind. In addition, there are 40 volunteers working with the service.

Current Performance Report:

(a) Performance against National Outcome Measures

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

The latest reported rate of FTEs per 100,000 10-17 years population in County Durham is **179**, a 31% reduction on the previous year.

This is a pleasing further reduction and is significantly lower than both the national and North East regional rates.

- **Re-offending**

Latest Ministry of Justice (MoJ) data (updated from document at appendix 2) shows a re-offending rate of **34.8%**. This is a reduction of 8 percentage points from the previous year performance.

This rate is lower than the regional rate and on a par with the national rate.

- **Use of Custody**

Custodial Sentences:

The rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence, per 1,000 10-17 years is **0.18**, a reduction of 75% on the previous year. This is on a par with both the National and North East with rates. 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. The bed nights refer to just 4 young people who all, ultimately, received a custodial sentence.

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

For the period 1.4.20 – 31.3.21, our work with the victims of youth crime has engaged **137** 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 **35** young people at any one time throughout the year (annual total of **67** young people). 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. Sales of the items made by young people (Xmas Wreaths, Garden Planters etc) as part of their reparation, enabled us to make donations to various charities (chosen by young people) of more than **£1,000**.

- 12 Along with all services of the Local Authority, CDYJS amended its service delivery methods in reaction to the demands of lockdown. However, we continued to provide a full service throughout all periods of COVID restrictions with staff managing both the risks presented by young people and their vulnerabilities. The Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 (endorsed by full Council on 14 July 2021) contains further details in respect of the Service's response to COVID restrictions.

The Voice of Young People, Families, Victims & Communities

- 13 CDYJS ensures that the views of young people, families, victims and communities continue to shape the things we do by:
- A structured process of feedback, for all groups, on the services we deliver
 - A Service consultation group of young people who are victims of crime
 - Structured feedback and support for community volunteers
 - Community volunteer oversight of the work of the Service
 - Elected Member discussions with the portfolio holder and presentation of reports to full County Council and Scrutiny
- 14 As a result of this work (and evidence that consultation has led to changes in the way we work), the Service has achieved national awards for our work with parents and our work with young victims. We have also been awarded 'quality marks' for 'Investing in Children' and 'Investing in Volunteers'.

Background papers

- CDYJS An Introduction (Appendix 2)

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications:

Statutory requirements placed on CDYJS 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, parents/carers, victims and communities are regularly consulted.

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 (2021/22) provides detail on how the partnership will undertake those functions.

Staffing:

Staff establishment is included in the Youth Justice Plan (2021/22), 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 Youth Justice Plan (2021/22).

Procurement:

Not applicable.