

## Corporate Parenting Panel

21 October 2022

### Youth Justice Service Update (Looked After Young People in the Youth Justice System, and First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System)



## Report of Dave Summers, County Durham Youth Justice Service Manager

### Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

### Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides an update on the work of County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS), with a focus on young people who are looked after by the Local Authority and our work to prevent young people from entering the youth justice system for the first time.

### Executive summary

- 2 CDYJS supervises all young people sentenced by the courts, all young people receiving a police caution and all young people remanded in secure accommodation awaiting trial/sentence. In addition, CDYJS also operates a Triage process and a Pre-Caution Disposal process which provide police officers with an alternative to 'formal' police action. All young people falling into any of these categories (with the exception of Triage) are fully assessed to ascertain their risks of reoffending and/or harm to others and their needs. An intervention plan is then produced which, in the case of young people looked after, is developed and delivered in partnership with colleagues in Children's Social Care and elsewhere.
- 3 On average, around **13%** of the cohort of young people supervised by CDYJS are looked after. At the end of September 2022, that amounted to **20** young people out of a total cohort of **157**.
- 4 'First Time Entrant' (FTE) refers to those young people receiving a caution or conviction for the first time. The latest available data shows **58** young people becoming an FTE in 2021/22. This is a rate of **125** per

100,000 10-17 year olds. This compares with an England average rate of **154**.

## **Recommendations**

5 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to:

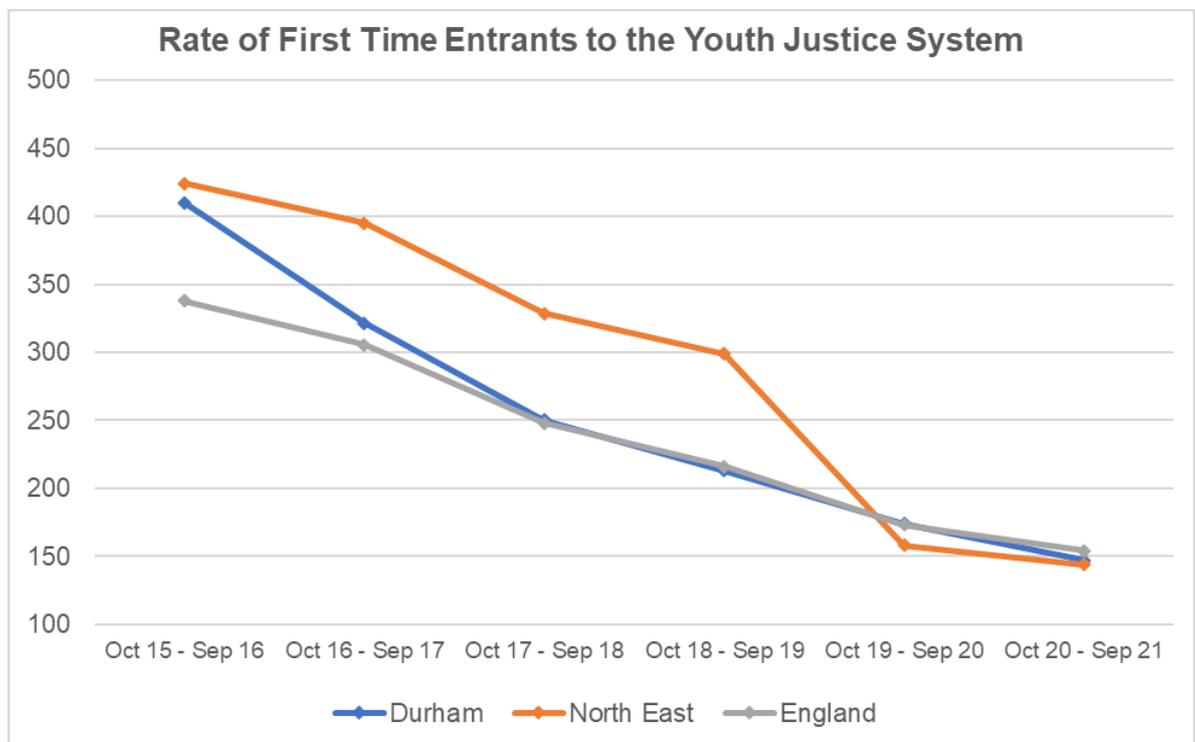
(a) Note the content of this report

## Background

6 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. A range of agencies second or deploy staff to CDYJS, these are:

- Durham County Council
- Durham Constabulary
- Probation Service
- Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (Funded by ICB)
- Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust (Funded by Public Health)
- Humankind (Funded by Public Health)
- North Tees & Hartlepool Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Funded by ICB).

7 Since 2015 we have achieved a **65% reduction** in first time entrants to the youth justice system. The latest available locally sourced data shows 58 young people entering the Youth Justice System in 2021/22 at a rate of 125 per 100 000 10-17 year olds.



8 In order to ensure continued improvement in performance in respect of first-time entrants to the youth justice system we have:

- Developed and introduced the VISIT Programme (Early intervention programme for children who come to the attention of the Police for violence for the first time). The programme was funded by the Youth Endowment Fund.
- Introduced a new assessment document and process that allows us to collate data on young people who offend
- Introduced a Triage intervention as a further alternative to caution/prosecution for police officers to refer young people to.
- Embedded a decision making panel, with Durham Constabulary, for out of court decision making involving a community member
- Developed a suit of intervention programmes that can be delivered either in-person or remotely
- Ensured greater coordination between 'on-street' restorative approaches by police and CDYJS interventions

9 CDYJS takes the view that whilst diversion from caution or prosecution of young people, when appropriate, is the preferred option; this can only be justified if there is a meaningful intervention, by CDYJS and other agencies working together with the young person which aims to reduce the risk of reoffending. Therefore, CDYJS provides the Pre-Caution Disposal (PCD), under which a full assessment of the young person is undertaken, and an intervention programme implemented. Currently, around 75% of young people receiving a PCD do not go on to reoffend

### **Young People Looked After**

- 10 Currently, 13% of the cohort of young people supervised by CDYJS are young people who are looked after. These include young people who become looked after because of their involvement with the youth justice system through being remanded to youth detention accommodation (secure) whilst awaiting trial or sentence.
- 11 During 2021 – 2022, Remand bed nights (Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation) at **5 nights** (3 young people) saw a **94.6% decrease** on the previous year. Each case where a young person was remanded to youth detention, has been reviewed and in all cases the remand to youth detention was considered appropriate due, mostly, to the seriousness of the offences but also due to the offending history of the young person.
- 12 Case Managers from CDYJS, including Social Workers, assess and plan in respect of young people, jointly with colleagues from Children's Social Care and other agencies when a young person is looked after.

The aim of joint planning is to ensure that decisions taken in respect of the care of a young person, in a looked after review for example, consider the impact that decision may have on the risk of reoffending and to ensure that the care needs of looked after young people are given full consideration in sentence planning.

- 13 We are currently undertaking a quality audit/review, jointly with colleagues in Children's Social Care and lead by a researcher from Cardiff University, of our work in respect of young people who are looked after to ensure that they are not unnecessarily criminalised for their behaviour compared to young people who are not looked after.

## **Conclusion**

- 14 Performance in respect of First Time Entrants to the youth justice system continues to show a positive picture as the reduction in FTEs is alongside a reduction in all offences committed by young people. The impact of a criminal record on the prospects of a young person, should not be under-estimated and is never positive. The aim of our work to reduce first time entrants is to ensure that only those young people for whom there is no acceptable alternative (due to the seriousness of the offence and/or offending history) are those who are cautioned or prosecuted at court.

## **Author**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None

### **Finance**

None

### **Consultation**

None

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

None

### **Climate Change**

None

### **Human Rights**

None

### **Crime and Disorder**

The statutory duty of County Durham Youth Justice Service is to prevent offending by children and young people.

### **Staffing**

None

### **Accommodation**

None

### **Risk**

None

### **Procurement**

None