

County Council

19 July 2023

County Durham Youth Justice Service,
Youth Justice Plan 2023 - 2024



Report of Corporate Management Team

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

Councillor Ted Henderson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children & Young People's Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report presents the Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 for information and comment and highlights some of the key achievements in reducing re-offending during 2022/23 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 was submitted to the YJB after being approved by County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS) Management Board (also a statutory requirement) on 26 June 2023.
- 3 There are a number of uncertainties which may impact on the partnership's ability to deliver our work and we may need to adjust our plan during the year. We are seeing significant changes in service demand, along with concerns from partners about resources and capacity to deliver what we would like to. At the end of June 2023, all local authorities were still awaiting confirmation of both the core grant from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and the Remand Grant from the Youth Custody Service (YCS). Once the settlement for both grants is known we will amend the plan accordingly if required but have based our assumptions on no significant changes compared with 2022/23.

4 **Performance against National Outcome Measures 2022/23:**

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

Between January 2022 and December 2022, the rate of FTEs per 100,000 10-17 years population in County Durham was 146, which is lower than the North East Region (153) but slightly higher than that of the England rate (142).

- **Re-offending**

Latest available Ministry of Justice data (July 2020 – June 2021) shows a re-offending rate of 36.6% which is a decrease of 1.5% compared to the previous year. This is a 15 percentage point reduction on the 2017/18 levels (51.9%). This rate is similar to the North East rate of 31.7% and the National rate of 31%.

- **Use of Custody**

County Durham Youth Justice Service performance has improved this year with a rate 0.11 per 1,000 10-17 year olds during April 2022– March 2023 (compared with a rate of 0.42 in 2018). This is a 28.6% decrease from the previous year and is the same as both the North East rate and England rate. 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: 293**

This is an increase on the previous year's very low figure (5 nights) and relates to 6 young people and 9 periods of remand. It should be noted that the year 2021-2022 was an unusual year in respect of remand bed nights.

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

Our work with victims of youth crime in 2022/23 has engaged a further 127 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 1,449 hours of unpaid work in communities in County Durham as a means of reparation.

6 Targeting those young people committing the most offences

The service has continued to prioritise our work with young people who are persistently offending with 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. 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.

Recommendation(s)

7 Council is recommended to:

- (a) note the contents of this report;
- (b) receive the Youth Justice Plan 2023/24.

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, Probation Service (PS) and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) 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 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 YJS 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 2022/23 and provides known service budgets, operational and strategic developments within the service and partnership, service structure and the Service Improvement Plan for 2023 – 2024.
- 11 In accordance with statutory requirements, the plan was approved by CDYJS Management Board on 26 June 2023.
- 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 2023. After submission to the YJB, Youth Justice Plans are sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP - lead for YJS inspections) and are placed in the House of Commons library.

Youth Justice Plan 2023 - 2024

- 13 A copy of the updated Youth Justice Plan is attached as Appendix 2.
- 14 The Plan outlines how CDYJS aims to:
 - (a) Reduce First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System;
 - (b) Reduce re-offending by young people;

- (c) 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) Improve the quality of our assessments and plans;
 - (c) Target 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) Continue 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 undertook a core inspection of CDYJS during the first week of August 2022. This was an intensive inspection requiring us to undertake 56 interviews with inspectors during the week. The overall rating for the service was 'Requires Improvement'. The overall rating is derived from a series of 'sub-ratings' which ranged from 'outstanding' for our work with high risk (MAPPA) cases who were leaving custody and 'good' for our assessment of young people subject to court sentences, to 'inadequate' for our assessment of young people subject to out-of-court disposals. CDYJS commitment to deliver the highest quality of service for young people, families and communities has resulted in a 'robust, comprehensive improvement plan' (HMIP) being developed which is incorporated within our Service Improvement Plan for 2023-24.
- 17 During the year we have also implemented new arrangements for the Ministry of Justice's Turnaround programme which seeks to support more early intervention and are working with a range of partners on anti-social behaviour interventions.
- 18 Throughout our work we seek to ensure we hear the voices of children and their families. We have sought to include some brief examples of

feedback from young people, parents and victims as quotes within the plan itself to try and indicate the impact and breadth of the service.

Background papers

- Youth Justice Plan 2023 – 2024 (Appendix 2)

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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 YJS 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 (NS) 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; Approving the annual Youth Justice Plan.

Finance

The Youth Justice Plan contains CDYJS partnership pooled budget and staff secondment/deployment arrangements for 2023/24. 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 (ICB) and Local Authority) agree funding contributions for the following year. Under the terms of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998; DCC, Durham Constabulary, Probation Service and ICB are required to both contribute staff and provide funding for a pooled budget for operating costs. The total budget for CDYJS for 2023/24 is to be confirmed. The total budget for CDYJS includes the cost of staff seconded to CDYJS from partners.

Consultation

CDYJS Management Board, partners, staff, young people, parents/carers have been consulted in updating the Youth Justice Plan. The portfolio holder for CYPS is regularly briefed on it and the related inspection requirements for this service area. The service also attends Scrutiny each year and presents at the Safe Durham Partnership.

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. Over representation of any groups within the youth justice system is specifically covered in the plan.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

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