

Councillor Lee Bridgeman
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Bridgeman

Further to your request for an update from the Youth Justice Service (YJS) following the visit from HMIP on 2nd December 2020, we have below set out a number of responses to your queries and requests and hope that these provide you with the information and updates you require.

It has been six months since the publication of 'All Our Futures' and this report summarises progress since July 2020 and sets out the next key steps.

Cardiff YJB working with Scrutiny Committee

After the Leader's Briefing and Scrutiny meetings in July and August 2020 a number of steps were put in place including:

- The Chair of Scrutiny now has the full Cardiff Youth Justice Board workplan and Governance arrangements including membership.
- The Chair of Scrutiny routinely is invited to joint Board / staff training sessions and also receives copies of the Board minutes.
- Plans are in place to enable a representative group of young people who are in the care of the YJS to meet with Scrutiny Councillors in mid March.

Strategy / Action Plan Update

Governance and Leadership

The adopted governance structure; which comprises the Strategic Youth Justice Advocacy Panel, Cardiff Youth Justice Board and Delivery Sub Committee, assists in providing functional clarity to the service. The Cardiff Youth Justice Board has been laying the groundwork by ensuring strategic attendance, clarifying roles and expectations, identifying service and partnership risks and improving analysis of the cohort.

The Board is now looking routinely at comparative performance data, engaging with practice - both as a group and individually, supporting joint partnership work in identifying areas to plug gaps, building shared understanding and identifying specific future developments. The work of the Board is now structured in a way which will enable more partner engagement with the cohort and practice, focused analysis and problem solving, and greater accountability. The Board annual workplan includes training, focus sessions with staff and partners, and 1:1 pairing with staff members. So far, all elements have been well received by both board members and Youth Justice staff.

Management

Additional resources have been allocated to recruit a full time Operational Manager for Cardiff YJS who commenced post in December 2020, and an interim third team manager from July 2020. Council resources have enabled YJS process mapping to define 'as is' and then to model a new staffing structure to be implemented during winter 2020/21. A new team management structure has been proposed and accepted at Job Evaluation panel. We are currently undertaking consultation with Trade Unions and staff, recognising the potential short term effects of further change and uncertainty whilst also ensuring that the children and young people within the service receive the best support they can.

Significant improvements for safeguarding are now in place, including a YJS-children's social care Memorandum of Understanding and direct engagement with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) at Team Manager level as part of their 'daily discussion' process. To ensure further joined up working, Team Managers from localities are also attending these meetings to ensure actions are acted upon immediately from any high risk incidents from the night before. This process also ensures PPNs are submitted swiftly and without delay.

Further to this the Senior Practitioner within the YJS team has been identified as the conduit between YJS and MASH – whilst not being situated within the MASH service, he is the designated 'expert' in this area and provides interface between the teams and contributes to developing staff knowledge in this area.

The YJS OM has now started to co-chair High Risk Panels alongside other OMs within Children's Services. The scorecard regarding the interface between YJS and Children's Services is discussed every month at the Children's Management Team.

Developments in Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) work are planned and the Board held a session, facilitated by our colleagues in Probation, specifically on managing risk in January 2021. The Board approved the nine policies required under the Youth Justice Board National Standards and further policy sign offs come to the Board based on priorities contained in the Action Plan.

Staff

The Development Strategy and other specific elements of work have engaged staff directly in shaping and delivery of the strategy. This will continue in the strategic stocktake in February 2021. Staff are involved directly with Board members through focus sessions, Board meetings and the 'Pairing' session. Board member engagement with staff on specific themes such as education, training opportunities, referral order panels, community groups and youth services is designed to build service bridges and understanding.

Staff workshops have informed the development of quality assurance and supervision policy and practice. Staff have been undertaking training on core practice including on assessment and multi-agency working. Staff views, gathered by external trainers, on the quality and value of training are informing management decisions. The Board routinely monitors staff wellbeing indicators.

The new health representative started in the service in November 2020 and is currently focusing on improving the interface between YJS and wider health provisions – this has ranged from liaising in relation to appointments to being part of the Strategic Health Needs Analysis being carried out by Public Health Wales. The hope is that she will move to becoming involved in more direct work with children and young people – she has also made links with counterparts in other YJS teams to share good practice and learned experiences.

The first Bureau (Joint Police / YJS Out of Court Disposal panel) took place at the start of February. It is envisaged that the Out of Court Disposal (OOC) work will be more structured following this implementation – the first Cardiff and Vale Police and Crime Commissioner OOC scrutiny panel also took place at the end of January. There are two Police officers currently in post within the YJS with the third on paternity leave – the two officers working within the team are due to commence their Professional Certificate in Effective Practice (Youth Justice) – joint funded between police and YJS – evidence of closer joint working between partner agencies.

Conclusions

Six months into a two-year improvement strategy, we are confident that the right foundations are in place – strategic scrutiny, improved partnership governance, service design and management approaches – to enable staff effectiveness, partner engagement and, critically, better engagement and outcomes for young people. A core part of the strategy has been to work towards engaging all relevant parts of the Cardiff community. This is critical to ensuring support for the work to improve the outcomes for the approximately 150 young people under the supervision of the YJS currently, but also to help change the way people think about young people in contact with the youth justice system.

As expected, the improvement process has required some refining as the work has proceeded. The close monitoring of the improvement work within the Children's Services Directorate means that we will be able to re-focus the sub-committee to undertake more partnership problem solving work round specific groups of children or aspects of practice. During February 2021 we will be undertaking a strategic stocktake to encapsulate the learning to date and the subsequent changes that we need to make. The HMIP visit in December 2020 will be an important contribution to that stocktake process.

HMIP visit 2 December 2020

The Chief inspector of HMI Probation and three inspectors visited Cardiff virtually on 2nd December 2020. This is the first time a model like this has been used by HMIP as a 'stocktake' on progress against an action plan for YOTS which received an 'inadequate' judgement. It is important to note the focus was on governance, management and partnership. There was no case scrutiny so HMIP did not reach any overall judgements.

The outcome has been a letter to set out key observations and recommendations. This will not be published and is in effect a management report to the Chief Executive and Board. The letter has been shared with the Chair of Scrutiny.

Key points made by HMIP in their summary of the day:

- It was a comprehensive review day – including meeting staff, partners as well as Board Officers and Councillors.
- HMIP noted the close collaboration between the Board, senior and operational staff and the local councillors.
- HMIP noted evidence of progress against the majority of the 14 inspection recommendations. Some had been fully achieved and others were being progressed through the work being undertaken within the development plan.

The conclusions from HMIP noted:

- Improved clarity of Governance and focus on the right priorities.
- Improved Board - staff joint work.
- Investment in dedicated new management arrangements.
- Encouraging feedback from the staff that the pace of change was welcomed and is supporting improved morale.
- Evident commitment to staff development and support.
- Service gaps have been filled.
- Evidently better working relationships between partner agencies.

HMIP also stressed three priorities for the next few months:

- The need for continuing focus on quality of practice and quality assurance.
- Ensuring the joint needs analysis is comprehensive and helps direct strategy and practice.
- Two new areas of the next HMIP inspection which will be Out of Court Disposals and resettlement.

Performance report

As of mid-January – there were 174 cases open to YJS with the vast amount of young people entering the service via the Prevention or Out of Court arena – only 40 cases are open on statutory court orders.

The split regarding age is 56% pre 16 (94) /46% post 16 (80).

Figures show an overall improvement in education hours for school age children with 60/94 receiving their full entitled hours of ETE – 5 were receiving no hours and this will be examined in the coming weeks regarding reasons / rationale.

For those young people who are not of school age, there is still work to be done to accurately capture data regarding ETE hours as currently only those on statutory court orders have hours routinely recorded. Approximately 40% are recorded as being in some form of education training and employment, however we are aware that this is not a true reflection and is already being addressed. The current arrangements with Careers Wales staff working within the service are also under review.

Quality Assurance update

- Silver Bullet Audit findings have been received and shared with those members of staff whose cases were selected for audit in order to provide individual feedback.
- The findings will now be shared anonymously with the whole YJS team regarding positive findings and improvements to be made.

- It was noted from the feedback that ‘pathways and planning’ was still an area that required great improvement within case management so further training sessions are already being undertaken with staff in respect of this by Wardell Associates.
- Gatekeeping forms have now been introduced for all reports for case management staff and report writers to understand what is required before a report is passed to a manager for sign off. It is also an evidence base to provide feedback to case workers for improvement.
- Quality assurance tools are to be shared with all YJS staff in the next team meeting – again for staff to understand what is required – a deep dive exercise of eight cases per month will shortly be commencing once these tools have been shared. The OM will be meeting with other OMs within Children’s Services to ensure consistency regarding this process.
- Further to this, from the beginning of January, all documents relating to a young person are now attached to Childview (YJS information system) so everything is in one place. Staff have been given training on how to do this. It was noted by the OM that this was not happening therefore information was not easily accessible in one place and important documents could be missed.
- Staff supervision has been booked in monthly for the upcoming year and supervision documents have been amendments to incorporate the Signs of Safety approach and action taken to ensure all managers are using the same document.

Hearing service users

A commitment in the Strategy “All Our Futures” was to take concerted action to enable the voice of service users to inform managers and strategic leads. This aligns with the commitments to the UNICEF Child Friendly Cardiff strategy.

Significant early steps have been taken to ensure the voices of young people who are users of the youth justice services are heard at service and board level.

- A young people’s panel was part of the interview process for the new Operational Manager post
- A review meeting of these young people with the Chief Executive and Chair has led to a bi-monthly themed discussion format – this started in January 2021 with a discussion on access to education and training where service users meet strategic and practitioners to discuss the experience of using YJS services and how they can be improved.
- This young people’s group will also take part in the March Scrutiny meeting.
- The Operational Manager has established a task and finish group to identify how ‘voice of child’ is currently heard and how improvements can be made. A survey has already been implemented to be distributed monthly via social media to all recent cases that have closed or have been open for a 12 month period in order to gain feedback around experiences. We will be reporting on this quarterly to the board as well as reporting what changes are made following feedback around improvement required.

- The Chair has also briefed Board and staff on the December 2020 UNICEF publication “ A Rights based analysis of Youth justice “ which stresses the importance of the voice of the child at the heart of practice and strategic decision making.
- The YJS health representative has also been asked by the YJS Operational Manager to assist with the Youth Justice Participation plan by completing the participation self-assessment documents against the Participation standards. This will identify areas of good practice and gaps in order to inform our plan going forward – this is being done with support from our colleagues within Education and the Youth Service.

As part of this we have ensured engagement with the Child Friendly Cardiff development work and will be briefing the Children’s Commissioner for Wales on progress.

The next six months

The core elements of the “All Our Futures” Strategy will continue with focused improvements on Governance, Management, Staff and Service Improvement.

The arrival of the new Operational Manager in December and a strategic stocktake process in January and February with staff and partners enables a review of the All Our Futures’ strategy to track progress, identify learning since July 2020 and prepare for the business plan 2021/22.

The new management structure is expected to be in place in the Spring, with a clearer focus on assessment, planning and partnership working.

There is a large piece of work being completed within Adolescent Services regarding Criminal Exploitation – the YJS is very much part of this; with YJS Case Planning Forums (CPFs), and Children’s Services Child Exploitation Multi Agency Safeguarding Meetings (CEMASMs) being joined together to ensure less duplication and more focus for our most vulnerable young people. This work is still in its infancy but the hope is to create a model similar to Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) forums in other areas recognising the current landscape in Cardiff and the need for agencies to be working together throughout. This will be based on best practice in other areas in Wales and England.

Further to this the YJS, alongside Safeguarding and Adolescent Services continue to seek and embrace further opportunities and developments to work more closely with the Violence Prevention Unit regarding reducing violent behaviour amongst the children and young people of Cardiff.

Cardiff YJS has been approached by YJB Cymru to be the first YJS in Wales to pilot work regarding Constructive Resettlement – this will hopefully begin to take more shape in the Spring and inform our Resettlement policy.

We should assume there will be a further full partnership HMIP inspection this year and so the board and service are preparing for that process. This is likely to be a three week visit again with a very significant focus on case quality. We are confident, given what HMIP

noted in December that there will be evident improvements in some structure and process work but we are also clear that to get improved Key Performance Indicators and quality of practice measures is going to take the two years, or more, of the Development Strategy.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services
Graham Robb, Independent Chair, Cardiff Youth Justice Board