

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**18 January 2022**

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**Youth Justice Service update**

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**Reasons for the Report**

1. This report provides the Committee with information in relation to Cardiff Youth Justice Service (YJS) – a multi-disciplinary service within the Local Authority with a statutory responsibility to prevent and reduce offending by children and young people. The report aims to inform the Committee of the current structure of the YJS along with data on outcomes and information about Children Looked After who come to the attention of the service

**Background**

2. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were set up following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act with the intention of reducing the risk of young people becoming involved in offending and reoffending behaviour; and then in turn to provide support and rehabilitation for those who do enter the service.
3. Cardiff YOT changed its name to Cardiff Youth Justice Service in 2020 recognising a changing landscape of young people engaging with the service, with many being referred in through a Prevention pathway where offences hadn't been committed. This also paid heed to the fact that the YJS supported victims of offences not just those who offend.
4. The Youth Justice Service works with young people between the ages of 10-18 – this includes those referred through Prevention, those diverted via Out of

Court Disposals and those on Statutory Court orders including custodial sentences. Voluntary support is also offered to young people subject to Police bail and as part of a formalised exit strategy.

5. Cardiff Youth Justice Service is a multi-agency team with secondees from Police, Probation, Health, Education and the third sector as well as Local Authority staff.
6. Governance of the Youth Justice Service sits between the Youth Justice Board and the Local Authority with additional funding for various projects and posts coming from the Welsh Assembly Government and the Police and Crime Commissioner
7. At any one time, the Youth Justice Service will be working with approximately 140 young people with the majority of these being via the Out of Court Disposal process.
8. Children Looked After, on average account for 15% of open cases to the Youth Justice Service.
9. When a child is remanded into custody, they automatically become a Child Looked After for the entire period of their remand, even if they were not known to Children's Services prior to the remand. Upon sentence, the CLA status ends. Currently two children are on remand –with upcoming trials due to start in early 2022.
10. **Data sets as of October 2021**
  - 20 young people known to the Youth Justice service were CLA
  - It is apparent there is a much higher ratio of male to female young people who are CLA when compared to the ratio of all young people engaged with the YJS.
  - The highest percentage of CLA were engaged on Referral Orders. This is the lowest level community order available to the courts, where successful completion results in the conviction being 'spent'.

- The majority were in the 'high' risk of reoffending bracket - the detail behind needs to be investigated further but could be due to a number of external or internal factors.

## **Next Steps**

11. The number of Children Looked After within Youth Justice has remained fairly steady and constant over recent years
12. It is clear that there is a disproportionate number of CLA within YJS compared to the overall population of Cardiff
13. Work is currently ongoing to implement the decriminalisation of CLA both within Cardiff via internal measures between YJS, Police and residential establishments, along with a wider focus via the Youth Justice Board
14. Internal protocols allow for a residential carer to contact YJS police in the first instance if not a 'serious' incident to consider how a situation could be managed 'restoratively' with YJS support without unnecessarily criminalising a young person for behaviour that perhaps a parent would feel able to manage appropriately. This is in the process of being rolled out across the city with YJS Police Officers introducing themselves to residential provisions.
15. In January 2022, the YJS substance misuse workers will be hoping to be able to deliver targeted workshops within residential units to offer advice and education in order to assist young people with making positive choices and decision in relation to both their substance misuse and recognising signs of potential exploitation
16. We have started reporting on our CLA cohort via quarterly reports to the Youth Justice Management board and also to the Youth Justice Service sub-committee where themes and trends will be able to be captured and fully explored

### **Financial Implications**

17. Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, the Youth Justice Service has a Base Budget of £764,450 and in addition received External Funding of £1.177m including £0.593m Youth Justice Service Grant and £0.480m from Children's and Communities Grant).

### **Legal Implications**

18. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

19. The Committee is recommended to note the Youth Justice Service update and to make any observations or comments.

**DEBORAH DRIFFIELD**  
**DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES**  
**20<sup>th</sup> December 2021**