

Cardiff Youth Justice Board

Report to Scrutiny Committee
19th October 2022

1) Service Performance

The Quarter 1 performance report is attached.

Recent developments in relation to staffing

Cardiff YJS now has 4 permanent team Managers in place

- Two covering Practice management and development
- One covering Prevention and Partnerships
- One covering Interventions and Planning

We are awaiting sign-off from Health in relation to the Speech and Language therapist post being advertised

QA

A Quality Assurance framework has been proposed and agreed in principle awaiting official sign-off from YJS Management Board. This includes individual assessment and report gatekeeping processes, staff observation, thematic dip sampling, and supervision dip sampling with embedded feedback loops. There is further space for wider thematic multi-agency work as directed via YJS management board & sub-committee.

Summer programme

The YJS ran a very successful diversionary activity programme over the summer facilitated by YJS staff and partners. It included a number of bespoke YJS activities taking place alongside integration of the YJS cohort into already available activities – these included cycling, cricket, beach walks, Cardiff aqua park, Summer of Fun activities, mindfulness, participation, pottery and football. We were able to work with partners such as the Youth Service and Cardiff City Foundation to provide activities every day over the summer holidays. An evaluation is attached

SAFE

The YJS OM chairs the SAFE multiagency partnership group as part of the wider SAFE agenda in recognising and responding to exploitation, with mapping, diversion and disruption as key elements of the group.

Schools

YJS OM presented at Headteachers Conference on 30th September alongside colleagues from Children's Services and the People and Communities Directorate outlining the work of the YJS and referral pathways as well as giving an update on the SAFE framework

Participation

Cardiff YJS will soon be able to use Xchange – an extension to the Children's Services Mind of My Own App to allow young people to communicate with staff through their preferred means of contact. We can capture views and feelings of young people in relation to a number of areas of YJS work

Volunteers

We have recently trained a new group of 12 volunteers from a variety of backgrounds – one of whom has entered through the St Giles peer mentor placement scheme as a volunteer with lived experience and will work from the YJS for at least a day a week offering support, guidance and intervention to young people. Their placement will be monitored by St Giles as they complete their Level 3 in Advice and Guidance.

We are starting to make active efforts to recruit from various ethnic and culturally diverse backgrounds to ensure we fully represent the young people we work with in the service and ensure we remain accessible to families

2) HMI Probation Inspection and YJB Monitoring

The service was inspected in March 22 and the report was published on 2 August 2022. The full report is at [Cardiff-YJS-inspection-report.pdf](#)

The Foreword extract summarises their conclusions

Overall, Cardiff YJS was rated as 'Requires improvement'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Good'.

This was a reinspection of Cardiff, following our previous visit in 2020, when we rated the service as 'Inadequate'. Completed as a joint inspection, alongside our partner inspectorates, we found an improved service. Despite a period of significant challenge and instability, throughout both the Covid-19 pandemic and the implementation of a new YJS organisational structure, the service has made important progress. The appointment of an independent board chair has ensured that the YJS has greater visibility, improved leadership and dedicated resources. Better governance arrangements have ensured that the clear focus of the management board is now on improving outcomes for YJS children.

Although improved in many aspects, not all arrangements with partners and providers are effective and not all of the key policies and guidance are of the required quality for staff to

deliver their work. This said, staff morale has improved since the last inspection, workloads are perceived as manageable and the frequency of supervision is improving.

Within their overall rating of 'Requires improvement', there is much to commend Cardiff YJS and the partnership for. There has been a clear trajectory of progress from our previous inspection and there are stable foundations on which to continue to build a high-quality service. We were encouraged by senior leaders' commitment and awareness of the issues to be addressed and make several recommendations that will enable the YJS to improve further.

HMIP made 7 recommendations in the report (There were 14 in the 2020 report)

As a result of our inspection findings, we have made seven recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth offending services in Cardiff. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The Cardiff Youth Justice Service Management Board should:

- 1. provide the management team with the necessary support to implement comprehensive quality assurance and workforce development arrangements*
- 2. use the existing disproportionality analysis to develop services further and ensure a more consistent focus on diversity in its casework*
- 3. ensure that the board sub-committee regains momentum, knowledge and commitment to enable consistent join-up between strategic and operational leadership and activity.*

The Cardiff Youth Justice Service Manager should:

- 4. strengthen the quality and consistency of management oversight of practice, to ensure that the quality of safeguarding and public protection work improves*
- 5. improve the quality of assessment, planning and reviewing of post-court work*
- 6. develop and update key policies, procedures and guidance that will enable all staff and partners to deliver high-quality work and respond to the profile and needs of all children supervised by the YJS.*

Cardiff and Vale Health Board should:

- 7. provide clarity to YJS staff on health pathways, to ensure the provision meets the needs of YJS children and is monitored for appropriate access, quality and timeliness.*

In response Cardiff Youth Justice Board submitted an Action Plan (attached) which HMIP formally accepted on 15 September 2022. This is now being monitored by Board and service for implementation.

There is great deal of detail in the report. Another cause for confidence in the direction of travel is that in 19 of 22 measures of casework practice Inspectors found improvement from 2020. Given that the new Management team has been in place from February 2022 we are confident that significant additional improvements are already evident in practice.

Further external assurance came on 9th September from Youth Justice Board for England and Wales who noted

HMIP returned to Cardiff with your report published in July 2022 and Cardiff was rated “requires improvement”. While this rating suggests there is still much work to be done in driving performance improvement across the service, it is evident from our engagement with you, the findings of the inspection report and from conversations with the inspectors that there has been sufficient and sustained progress made since 2020, and given more time there is potential for Cardiff to progress to a good service.

Cardiff now has a clear action plan to implement the recommendations from this latest inspection and strong leadership from the management board and senior leaders in the local authority.

As a result, the Board agreed that Cardiff Youth Justice Service should no longer be considered a priority status service. This complete de-escalation from priority status is in recognition of the progress that has been made in your improvement journey over the course of the last few years, and the confidence we, as the YJB, have in operational management and senior leadership within Cardiff to continue to deliver against this improvement and deliver positive outcomes for children.

The YJB commends you on the progress your service has made and the way in which you have approached your improvement journey. We wish you, your staff, the children and families you serve the best of luck for the future.

3) YJ Strategy 22-24 : BUILDING SAFER FUTURES TOGETHER

(NB Strategy attached)

This has been developed after workshops in January to March involving staff, councillors, partners inc community groups, Board members. Core to this has been engagement with young people. Their views inform this strategy - be they encouragement because of good work or challenges to our services to improve or to wider services, or to the wider community.

The two-year strategy for the partnership is the overarching framework for an annual Youth Justice Plan which the Board submits to the Youth justice Board for England and Wales. The strategy was informed by the outcomes of the HMIP inspection in April 2022

- a) Our commitment to the Child Rights approach through CFC
- b) Three Partnership themes
 - a. Working with ... Child and Family based practice with partners
 - b. System analysis and change Exploitation and Disproportionality
 - c. Better Choices; Safer places ... Advocacy, coaching and safe places at critical moments
- c) Sustaining Governance and Leadership – sustaining momentum plus CCE , Disproportionality and post COVID risks

The strategy was launched by the Leader at a partnership conference on 27 September 2022. This had been co designed with some of the children we work with and in addition we welcomed Councillors, Chief Executive, staff, Board, Sub-committee members and partner organisations.

Overall we feel the aims were achieved

- We showed how the voice of children is informing what we do
- the Leader launched the Strategy- and his line about YJServices needing to be recognised and owned by all partners was a welcome restatement
- we celebrated the progress over the last two years
- we worked to identify steps to achieve the next set of goals

It was great to have young people engaged in the design contributing – and there for a while - plus staff and partner colleagues. But also to welcome folk who are going to be key to our next steps- the chair of the secondary heads network, the chair of the magistrates youth bench, and Cardiff services in wider family engagement and support work.

In listening to the table discussions and feedback I picked out four themes under a broad label of "Sustaining the YJS momentum "

- A) The lives of children, families and communities already under post covid pressures and now with additional economic stresses – will present new risks in children's lives .We need to identify understand those and then be able to respond to get the best possible outcomes
- B) The major changes in Cardiff schools in the next years in terms of curriculum , measures and focus , is a hugely important development
- C) The recognition of multiple , untapped services, new projects, funds, evidence base into which the YJservices can be plugged to achieve some short term ,some longer-term changes
- D) Communicating in new ways - with children perhaps through an App , with some partners who are not yet integrated with our daily and strategic work, and finding ways to reassure families and communities that work by YJS partners makes things better and gives safe futures for all.

Alongside this we have developed a Children's Rights Impact assessment on the strategy to show how we will know that we are embedding the CFC principles in our work.

Angharad Thomas

Graham Robb

Operational manager

Independent Chair