

Cabinet Meeting

24 February 2016

Report title	Full Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Team	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Children and Young People	
Originating service	Youth Offending Team (YOT)	
Accountable employee(s)	Sally Nash	Head of Service – YOT
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Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board	16 February 2016

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Receive the inspection report¹ and recognise the strong level of performance identified in the inspection process.
2. Support the continuing work to address the inspection recommendations and further improve practice.

¹ <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/wolverhamptonfji/>

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is advise Cabinet on the November 2015 Full Joint Inspection (FJI) of the Wolverhampton Youth Offending Team (YOT), the outcome of which demonstrated a high performing organisation.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 YOTs are multidisciplinary services set up under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 with the main aim of preventing youth offending and reoffending. Since their inception, YOTs have been subjected to a variety of regulatory and inspection mechanisms.
- 2.2 The current inspection regime comprises a variety of methodologies, the most intense of which is the FJI. A variety of single agency inspectorates participate in a YOT FJI including the Care Quality Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) Social Care, OFSTED Learning and Skills and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, the latter of which will lead the inspection team. The involvement of the User Voice organisation is also commissioned to ensure that the views and feedback of service users is obtained and valued in the process. The FJI process comprises two fieldwork weeks; one involving intense scrutiny of 35 sample cases from the caseload; and the second week interviewing YOT partners about the quality of work.
- 2.3 An FJI is undertaken in six local authority areas each year, one of which is in Wales. The FJI Inspection in Wolverhampton was announced at the end of October 2015 and we were informed this was as a consequence of some concerns about the regularity of the YOT Management Board and the submission of the Youth Justice Plan in 2014/15.
- 2.4 The Wolverhampton FJI report was published on 9 February 2016. This included a press release and the publication of an extensive and comprehensive report of the findings.

3.0 Feedback on the Inspection Process

- 3.1 The FJI process was found to be very intense and demanding for all YOT staff and partners. It is pleasing to report that here in Wolverhampton the partnership response to the Inspection was very strong and over thirty partners were interviewed and consulted within the course of the second fieldwork week. Twenty three service users (young people, carers and victims) were interviewed in the first week and this was a higher number than the expected norm which was particularly commended by the Lead Inspector. There was also considerable pressure on a relatively small number of case managers in the staff group, both Social Workers and a Probation Officer, but the case file inspection outcomes were very positive.
- 3.2 There were set judgement criteria for the FJI which comprised six categories. The graded outcomes for these criteria range from one star to four stars without an overall judgement. Research has shown that of the YOTs selected for FJI in the last three years, Wolverhampton is the highest performing YOT service. The six categories with their Wolverhampton star ratings are as follows:

- Reducing Reoffending 4 stars
- Protecting the Public 4 stars
- Protecting children and young people 3 stars
- Ensuring the sentence is served 4 stars
- Governance and partnerships 3 stars
- Interventions to Reduce Reoffending 4 stars

3.3 As with all inspection regimes, there is an expectation that an Improvement Action Plan (IAP) is developed following the publication of the report. Wolverhampton commenced work on the IAP as soon as verbal feedback had been received on the Inspection findings, and this is now confirmed following receipt of the final written document. There are six key recommendations identified for improvement by the report:

1. Education, Training and Employment (ETE) outcomes for children and young people should be improved to ensure they are equipped with skills that contribute towards maximising their chances of employability
2. Leaders and managers should exercise their influence at all levels to secure an improved education and training offer that meets the behavioural and vocational needs of children and young people known to the YOT
3. The YOT Management Board (YMB) should include a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) representative
4. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) should be a standing item on the YMB agenda
5. Outcomes from the delivery of interventions should be evaluated in order to ensure that their impact is understood
6. Planning for work to reduce reoffending should take full account of barriers to engagement and the diversity needs of children and young people.

3.4 The first two key areas for improvement involve the need to address the quality of education, training and employment (ETE) outcomes for YOT children and young people. As part of the drive for this improvement, a review of 'Post 16' and alternative education provision has been commissioned by City of Wolverhampton Council's Strategic Executive Board. This work will enhance the current action plan within the YOT which targets the need to improve the engagement of young offenders in ETE, and the corporate target relating to educational engagement of Looked after Children and Young Offenders.

3.5 For a while there has been a delivery gap in the YOT in relation to CAMHS both in terms of operational staffing and strategic involvement in the YMB. The third Inspection recommendation relates to addressing this gap, and a staff post has already been scoped with recruitment now underway, and also there is now active strategic involvement in the YMB by CAMHS.

3.6 The Inspection team were particularly concerned with the quality and depth of YOT work that targets CSE. The fourth recommendation suggests that CSE issues are a standing item on the YMB agenda to ensure that this issue continues to receive strategic attention and that operational issues are escalated where appropriate. The report noted the YOT is strongly involved in current partnership CSE related initiatives. The YMB met at the end of January 2016 when a briefing paper was presented in respect of CSE issues. The

intention moving forward is to ensure that this and other Safeguarding issues receive agenda priority.

- 3.7 YOT reoffending levels were recognised as being some of the lowest in the country – within the top ten from the recorded figures. The fifth recommendation from the Inspectorate involves ensuring that the YOT interventions are properly evaluated to ensure the partnership understands ‘what works’ and assists with sustaining this success in the future. The YMB is looking to commission a bespoke piece of work to evaluate our interventions so that we can be more confident of future planning and resource allocation.
- 3.8 The final recommendation relates to the need to reduce barriers for engagement for some of the most disadvantaged young people which can be exacerbated by issues of diversity and disadvantage. Wolverhampton YOT has a strong record of commitment to improving quality of services to our diverse service users and this recommendation endorses this drive for this continuous improvement
- 3.9 In terms of strategic governance, the YMB and Youth Justice planning, the Inspectorate were satisfied that the concerns that had triggered this FJI had reflected a period of change in the whole YOT partnership. The report indicated that there was satisfaction that the current partnership arrangements were strong with some notable features including the membership of the Courts and Voluntary sector. There was a recognition that the YMB was well managed with good capacity to drive improvement. It was noted that the 2015/16 plan was one of the first submitted to the Youth Justice Board.
- 3.10 The IAP is approved by the Youth Justice Board and we are awaiting feedback from the Lead Inspector to confirm that all areas for consideration are covered. This IAP will be monitored by the YMB and needs to be signed off as complete within twelve months. In terms of Youth Justice planning, it is intended that the IAP will constitute the key themes of development for 2016/17, with a small number of additional targets which were not within the assessment scope of the FJI.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 Any costs that arise as a result of the implementation of the improvement action plan (IPA) will be contained within existing budgets within the Youth Offending Service.
[NM/09022016/J]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this inspection report.
[RB/11022016/N]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 An equalities analysis has recently been undertaken in respect of the work of the Youth Offending Team. This has assisted planning & future improvements, ensuring they target the most disadvantaged young people.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this Inspection report.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this Inspection report.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from the Inspection report.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 The FJI report is available on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation website from 11 February 2016

<http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/wolverhamptonfji/>