

**05 February 2024**

Report sponsor: Suanne Lim, Director  
of Early Help and Children's Social  
Care

Report author: Andrew Kaiser, Head of  
Specialist Services

## **Youth Justice Service**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 with the purpose of preventing offending by children and young people. They are the key to successful intervention in the lives of children and young people who commit criminal offences or who are at risk of committing criminal offences and their families.
- 1.2 YOTs are multi-agency teams made up of representatives from Police, Probation Service, Social Services, Education and the Health Service. They carry out comprehensive assessments of children and young people to find out the reasons for their offending behaviour or risk of offending behaviour enabling YOT staff to identify suitable programmes to deal with the offending behaviour/risk of this, with the aim of preventing offending or further offending
- 1.3 Many YOTs now have a range of partnership practitioners in their teams to address specific difficulties faced by children and young people, which has changed over time to meet the assessed needs of children and young people within the service.
- 1.4 YOT staff also work closely with the youth courts (based in Magistrates Courts) and the Crown Courts in providing Pre-Sentence Reports to help magistrates and judges decide on the appropriate sentence to impose on children and young people who are convicted of a criminal offence. In Derby we have re-branded our YOT to a Youth Justice Service (YJS) to better represent the work we are delivering to prevent and divert children and young from entering the criminal justice system and to ensure a 'child first offender second' approach that is in line with the Youth Justice Boards strategic vision and works in line with Derby Children's Services strengths-based model where risk of harm is not ignored but is best addressed by identifying and building on the strengths of children and families.

### **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To ensure Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board are made aware of the current arrangements for delivering youth justice services in Derby and can make any comments in relation to this.

### **Reason(s)**

- 3.1 To ensure Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board can raise any areas where they feel the direction of travel for the service is going well and any areas where

they are concerned, which can be used to inform service direction in terms of planning and delivery.

### **Supporting information**

- 4.1 The following information provides an overview of key functions and activity of the service starting with Governance and Leadership: Derby YJS is located in the People's Directorate of Derby City Council and forms part of Children's Early Help and Children's Social Care. Governance oversight is provided by a multi-agency Youth Justice Partnership Board which meets four times annually, chaired by the Service Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care. The Board scrutinises service performance and develops actions for improvement where necessary. Board attendees consist of statutory and wider partner organisations, such as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire, the Headteacher from the city's Pupil Referral Unit and the Community Safety & Integration Team. The Board arrangements allow the YJS to overcome barriers to effective multi-agency working and ensure partner agencies make meaningful and informed contributions towards delivery against key youth justice outcomes. Examples include financial support for commissioning of bespoke services for children, i.e., matched funding to recruit a Speech and Language Therapist from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Board is sighted on key arrangements i.e., staffing, finance, and risk management and on key strategies such as the Health Pathway, CONCORDAT, SEND, and Prevention and Diversion strategies
- 4.2 Regarding staff resources, the YJS has a management team encompassing: a Head of Service, a shared resource across four other service areas, a Principal Service Manager and 2.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Service Managers. The service has a 1.0 FTE Information Analyst, who ensures timely submission of data, compliance with secure estate placement information and completion of KPI and National Standards audits. There are 4.8 FTE Social Workers who manage Pre- and Post-Court cases, deliver Court services including duty court cover at weekends/Bank Holidays, and write Court reports, amongst other activities. This group of staff are supported by a 0.8 FTE Seconded Probation Offender Manager, whose focus is on older children transitioning to the Probation Service. We have 2.0 FTE Youth Justice Workers who primarily manage Pre-Court cases in line with our strategic priority to increase the volume of pre court diversionary work.
- 4.3 To meet the needs of our children, the service has a range of partnership/specialist staff including: a Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Team (based in Police custody cells), 1.0 FTE CAMHS Officer, 0.5 FTE Clinical Psychology (this role is now a permanent part of the service, agreed by Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board), 0.6 FTE Speech and Language Therapist. The service has secondment of two part-time Police Officers who together make up 1.0 FTE provision. The Officers support broader intelligence gathering and risk management via engagement in missing children's groups, CRE meetings, Risk Strategy/MAPPA meetings, and attendance at local tasking meetings.
- 4.4 The service also has a 0.5 FTE Education Officer funded by Derby City Council, who has partnership links with Schools and other key secondary education activities, i.e., attendance at Secondary Placement Panel where placements for pupils who have been permanently excluded are discussed and potential managed moves for pupils at risk of exclusion are considered. Derby City Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire co-fund targeted Early Help resources (4 FTE Youth Crime Prevention Workers) for children at risk of offending/anti-social behaviour. These practitioners are based within locality Early Help teams, who are co-located with our safeguarding Children's Social Care teams.

- 4.5 To augment the targeted Early Help and prevention, the service has developed its Turnaround offer for children and young people by utilising Ministry of Justice funding (funded until April 2025) to employ 2.5 FTE Childrens Practitioners who are based in our Early Help services and complete triage/Early Help Assessments and deliver interventions for children and families who meet the Turnaround eligibility criteria, which aims to divert children from the formal criminal justice system by offering bespoke interventions based on assessed needs.
- 4.6 Our **Junior Attendance Centre** arrangements have been embellished by using YJB funding for 2 therapeutic mentors, which has replaced some of the services delivered by our former Youth Well-being Worker
- 4.7 The service has a statutory duty to comply with the **Victim Code of Practice** and ensure delivery of restorative justice and victim participation. Commissioned provider Remedi are contracted to provide restorative justice services, including the facilitation of reparation activity that is mandated for virtually all community court disposals. In addition, the service provides a full-time Victim Liaison Officer whose purpose is to provide victim-facing services and ensure the service remain compliant with the Victim Code of Practice. This is a post through which the service has ensured that 100% of all people eligible for contact, that are made victims by a child subject to Derby YJS supervision on a criminal justice order, are contacted to be offered a range of services.
- 4.8 Performance for the service is managed through 13 KPIs, 3 of these have been long standing KPIs (First Time Entrants (FTE), Custody & Re-offending). These offer headline data and have been augmented by 10 more qualitative indicators that all YJS' in England Wales will be expected to make returns on. This is a recent development, and the first returns were submitted in late 2023 and the YJB are working with YJS' Information Analysts presently to ensure accuracy of this data before publishing any public data. The new KPI's include access to substance misuse services, mental health services, attendance at Partnership boards by partners and access to suitable accommodation.
- 4.9 In relation to the long standing KPIs, historically Derby has had a higher rate of FTE than many of its comparator authorities. This has become a strategic priority for the service and key partner Derbyshire Constabulary with a new Prevention and Diversion Clinic having been designed to ensure all children who could be charged with an offence are triaged by a clinic including both Police and YJS representatives. We have seen a slow but sure turn of the curve on this performance measure with the number of FTE in quarter 3 reducing from 18 to 13. Eight of these children were directly charged to court for driving matters, which can be dealt with out of court (avoiding a child becoming a FTE), however before Derbyshire Constabulary change this charging practice, they want to be assured that a robust driving programme is available to all children to reduce risks associated with this type of offence.
- 4.10 Performance for re-offending has historically been strong and remains so presently, this is measured on a cohort of children who reoffend (within a 3-month window) who are then tracked for if they re-offend and if so, how many re-offences they commit. The strong performance demonstrates the strong operational team we have in place who offer a range of interventions to children and young people based on good relational Social Work skills. Performance against the custody metric can be volatile depending on what is happening in the city. We saw a rise in more serious offences as we first came out of lockdowns, but this has started to abate in the past 12 months and our number of secure remand has also significantly decreased in the past 12 months, which is a positive measure both socially and financially.

- 4.11 The service is quality assured in several ways, this includes internal quality assurance work to assess the quality of case files, deep dive reports into certain areas of practice and external inspection activity. The latter is delivered by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) and the last inspection activity was in June 2023; a thematic inspection of bail and remand practice (jointly with OFSTED). This was not a judged inspection but has informed a national report into this area of practice (9 other YJS' were inspected). There was narrative feedback to Derby YJS highlighting areas of good practice as follows: *"Children's Social Care and Youth Offending Service interface really effective, no tensions were observed, and the co-location supported this work, the specialist IRO role for children involved in offending cited as best practice and the IRO clearly understands both systems and there were good relationships with defence solicitors, and this was not seen as an issue in Derby as it can be in other areas"*. There have been recommendations in some areas of practice, which have been shared with the full staff team and will also go to Children's Practice and Development board to agree how these are taken forward.
- 4.12 The last 'full' inspection of Derby YJS was in 2018 and the service was rated 'Good'. There is currently a live consultation through HMIP to inform how the next round of inspection will look for YJS', Derby YJS has already fed back on the proposals, which are proposing to make inspection activity more regular and risk based, whilst retaining a number of the approaches seen in full inspection previously.
- 4.13 The service also has a statutory duty to submit a Youth Justice plan annually, which is part of its conditions of grant from the YJB, this includes a range of information including governance, operational arrangements, performance, progress against key areas of practice, a development plan and workforce plan. Derby has a history of submitting this in a timely way and receiving positive feedback from the YJB on the quality of the plan.
- 4.14 Research and local insight tell us that a significant number of children in the service have additional needs (usually 20-25% of children open to the service have an Education, Health and Care Plan). There are also challenges with regards to children's timetables, exclusions from School, speech and language challenges etc. The service has developed a health pathway to ensure that all children accessing the service can be triaged by health practitioners in the team including, Clinical Psychology, Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Team, CAMHS Officer and Speech and Language Therapist to ensure the right services are offered to children and families and they are placed on the right pathways for support. Often, children enter the service as older children with needs not having been identified at an earlier point in their lives, with has then led to involvement in criminal or anti-social behaviour. There is a need for partner agencies to identify these needs at an earlier point and part of the services work is signposting families to other support services such as Family and Neurodiversity Hubs, especially where there are younger siblings in the home.
- 4.15 We have also developed multi-agency arrangements with partners for our CONCORDAT arrangements to help avoid unnecessary criminalisation of children in our care, for ensuring a cohesive approach to children with behaviour that could be sexually harmful, developed in conjunction with our Workforce Learning and Development Team and Children's Social Care colleagues.

## **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 Derby YJS utilises service-users' voice to ensure aggregated participation feedback informs annual reports and service plans, including methods for how reparation

activities are delivered, and Referral Order panels are conducted. This year, children and young people have been consulted on the re-branding of the service and a change in the service icon, with a young person's design now the services key pictorial identifier. Derby YJS uses the 'YJS Order End Questionnaire' to capture aggregated voice of children to inform service developments, which has led to the re-branding of practitioners' roles to make these more 'Child First'. Derby YJS worked with User Voice to seek feedback from children in relation to the HMIP's Thematic Inspections of Bail and Remand arrangements for 10 YJS' this summer, the feedback was included in the full national report in late 2023.

## **Other options**

- 6.1 The service is statutory in nature under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requiring a range of partner agencies from Social Services, Health, Police, Probation and Education. The service has significantly reduced in size due to budgetary pressures in recent years but remains in a position to delivery both its statutory responsibilities and other activity to help improve practice and divert/prevent children entering the criminal justice system. The inspection model in place now and going forward means there remains the need for a composite and self-contained multi-agency service that has links across to other elements of Children's Services and criminal justice partners and where the service sits now strategically and physically is the ideal fit to ensure the service retains its ability to meet statutory and developmental aims.

## **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 The service has a combined set of funding arrangements in place with funding from the Local Authority, the YJB, Ministry of Justice (temporary grant funding), partner agencies; although contributions from Probation and Health are financially minimal but in-kind payments through staffing are more robust. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire also contributes to this funding and there are remand costs that are a combined contribution from the Local Authority and YJB. This year, the service has managed to deliver high quality services but underspent, due mainly to low remand numbers and have contributed towards savings in other areas of services that have been more finically compromised.

## **Legal implications**

- 8.1 The Local Authority has a legal duty to have a multi-agency YJS in place and the model in place meets this statutory duty and ensures that the range of statutory functions of the service can be met effectively.

## **Climate implications**

- 9.1 There are no specific climate implications as a result of this report.

## **Socio-Economic implications**

- 10.1 Children and families accessing the service often face socio economic challenges and the service uses its knowledge of community resources to ensure families are signposted to the right service to support in this regard. There are also good links with Children's Social Care and Early Help teams to ensure where any further support is

needed, this can be accessed. Bringing about reductions in children's offending helps their life chances and in turn improves the probability of avoiding socio economic disadvantage longer term.

### **Other significant implications**

11.1 No other significant implications

This report has been approved by the following people:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign off</b>
<b>Legal</b>	Olu Idowu	25/01/2024
<b>Finance</b>	Janice Hadfield	26/01/2024
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Suanne Lim	26/01/2024
<b>Report sponsor</b>	Suanne Lim	26/01/2024
<b>Other(s)</b>	NA	
<b>Background papers</b>	NA	
<b>List of appendices</b>	NA	