

13 September 2022		ITEM: 8
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
The Inspection of the Young Offending Service 2022		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Report of: Clare Moore, Strategic Lead Youth Offending Service and Prevention		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Assistant Director of Children’s Social Care and Early Help		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

An inspection of Thurrock Council’s Youth Offending Service by HMIP took place between 16 and 20 May 2022. The service was rated as overall ‘Good’ and inspectors found that the service has outstanding leadership and does excellent work in assessing what intervention is required to help prevent young people from re-offending. The inspection has 13 judgements, 6 were rated Outstanding, 4 as Good and 3 as Requires Improvement.

HMIP as an outcome of the inspection published a report. The Inspection Report is attached as Appendix 1 and was published on the 23rd August 2022. The report found that the service “has firmly embedded a child-first culture at a strategic and operational level, not detracting from its focus on keeping other people safe.” It also highlighted that active and cohesive partnerships and a commitment to learning and using an evidence-based approach means that the service has an effective strategy to deal with gangs and the young people they exploit and that it does a good job supporting children to stop them from re-offending. The report says:
“Children have good access to support for education, training, and employment; emotional and mental health; and speech, language, and communication.”

The 5 day on-site inspection was very intense, thoroughly testing the practice of the service and partnership for our most vulnerable young people. The outcome of the inspection is evidence of the hard work and commitment of all those striving to ensure children involved with the YOS receive good services within the Council and from partners.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Inspection Report of Thurrock Youth Offending Service and provide comment or challenge in respect of the outcomes**
- 1.2 That the areas for improvement and recommendations identified by HMIP are considered by the Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee and support offered to deliver against these recommendations.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. The inspection standards cover three domains and one stand-alone standard for resettlement. Domain one covers organisational delivery, including how well the Youth Offending Service is led and governed, including leadership, staffing, and partnerships. Domains two and three look at the quality of post-court supervision and the quality of out-of-court disposals respectively. The stand-alone resettlement standard covers resettlement policy and provision. This report needs to be read in conjunction with HMIP’s inspection report of the Youth Offending Service published in August 2022.
- 2.2 An inspection of Thurrock’s Youth Offending Service took place in May 2022 and was announced on the 08 April 2022, five weeks before the Inspection began. During the intervening period, inspectors were provided with over 100 documents, performance data and they undertook inspection meetings with the Corporate Director for Children’s Services, Assistant Director, Children’s social care, YOS team members and Partners. The Inspection was very thorough, and inspectors examined the experience of children through the lens of YOS and partnership interventions, by talking directly to YOS workers and examining their case work files in detail. They also met with young people, parents and carers and with partners. The inspectors were focused on evidence of impact of interventions and outcomes for children. The ‘on-site’ inspection was very intense, it thoroughly tested the practice of the service and partnership and corporate support and commitment from the Council for some of our most vulnerable young people. The Inspection is a judgement inspection
- 2.3 Whilst the inspection is overall very positive (please see report attached as Appendix 1), HMIP noted some areas for continued improvement and there are eight recommendations to further improve practice for children receiving a service from the YOS partnership. These are:
 - consider the nine characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 in its work to strengthen service provision
 - take steps to understand and address the overrepresentation of children known to children’s social care referred to the out-of-court decision-making panel

- strengthen its understanding of the impact of out-of-court disposals on first-time entrance rates by scrutinising disposal decisions made by the police
- involve children and their parents or carers in strategic and operational development work.
- provide a child-friendly, appropriate environment for children to meet with case managers and YOS specialists.
- make sure contingency planning supports an effective partnership response to changes in a case
- engage more effectively with operational partners to plan and deliver services to promote children's safety and wellbeing
- include an appropriately informed YOS assessment of need in the out-of-court decision-making process.

These recommendations are being taken forward within partnership and service plans. The Youth Crime Governance Board which is a partnership Board is important to assist with moving forward these recommendations.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The HMIP Inspection Report is attached as Appendix One.

The three 'Requires Improvement' grades are within the Domain for Out of Court Disposals. Work has already commenced to address these areas for improvement and a formal action plan incorporating the 8 recommendations will be completed by the 16 September in consultation with the Youth Crime Governance Board and submitted to the HMIP.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Members of the Board are aware of the YOS Inspection conducted by HMIP and the recommendations to further improve practice and outcomes for young people.
- 4.2 For the Board to have oversight of the plans against the recommendations and to provide support and challenge progress as appropriate.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Not applicable

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 Tackling youth crime and gang related violence is a priority for the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), Youth Crime Governance Board and appears within the Youth Justice Plan 21-24, which is monitored monthly. Serious Youth Violence is also a priority within the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Plan, The Violence and Vulnerability Plan, The Health and Well-being Plan and the Brighter Futures Children's Partnership Plan. Performance against the recommendations of the HMIP Inspection will be monitored via the Youth Crime Governance Board.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Corporate Finance – Resources and Place Delivery

There are no Financial Implications.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Petrena Sharpe**
Safeguarding Lawyer – Team Leader

There are no legal implications.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

Children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are overrepresented in the Youth Justice System nationally and locally, especially within the Secure Estate. The recommendations from this inspection highlight the need to monitor the needs of the young people who fall within the 9 protected characteristics and strengthen the responses we give them.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

Looked After Children are also overrepresented in the Criminal Justice System. There are systems in place to monitor the numbers and to successfully divert them away from criminal activity.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report

[An inspection of youth offending services in Thurrock \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](http://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 – Inspection Report

Report Author:

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