

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 13 November 2024

By: Director of Children’s Services

Title: Inspection of youth justice services in East Sussex

Purpose: To provide an update on the inspection outcome and next steps

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Welcome the findings of the inspection of the work of youth justice services in East Sussex published on 17 September 2024 attached at appendix 1 of the report; and
 - 2) Note the action plan at appendix 2 of the report which has been developed to address the areas for improvement
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1 Background

1.1 HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) undertook an inspection of our youth justice services (YJS) 10 – 14 June 2024. The inspection covers three broad areas:

- the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service
- the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts
- the quality of out-of-court disposal work

2 Supporting information

2.1 A copy of the report, published on 17 September, is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 The overall rating for East Sussex YJS is Good. The quality of resettlement policy and provision is rated separately and was rated as Requires improvement. The judgements for each area of the inspection are set out below. Five of the thirteen areas are Outstanding and four are Good.

Judgement	Rating
Overall Rating	Good (25/36)
1. Organisational Delivery	
Governance and leadership	Good
Staff	Good
Partnerships and services	Outstanding
Information and facilities	Outstanding
2. Court disposals	
Assessment	Good
Planning	Inadequate
Implementation and delivery	Outstanding

Judgement	Rating
Reviewing	Outstanding
3. Out-of-court disposals	
Assessment	Requires improvement
Planning	Requires improvement
Implementation and delivery	Outstanding
Out-of-court disposal policy and provision	Good
4. Resettlement	
Resettlement policy and provision	Requires improvement

2.3 During the inspection week the inspectors reviewed 37 cases. They met with staff, partners, children and young people and parents and carers. The report notes 'Partners engage well at board meetings and are excellent ambassadors for YJS children' and praises the staff, 'Staff are highly committed to delivering positive outcomes for children'.

2.4 The report highlights key areas of strength including:

- Partnership working that provides tangible, individualised services for children with different lived experiences is a notable strength.
- Activity to tackle disproportionality is clear at both a strategic and operational level, and action plans are leading to better outcomes for children with complex needs.
- Leaders and partners have worked positively to build a clear vision and carve out a road map to help children live their best lives and thrive. The Chief Officers Group (COG) management board is led well by a dedicated chair.
- Partners take their responsibilities seriously and work collectively to overcome any structural barriers experienced by children.
- The integration of the voices of children and their parents and carers into service development is impressive and has led to service improvements.
- YJS staff are highly motivated and focused on helping each child to thrive.
- They are led well by an experienced, passionate and forward-thinking strategic lead for specialist adolescent services.
- Senior leaders, managers, stakeholders and operational staff across the partnership seek feedback from children and their parents and carers, and actively use it to improve service delivery.
- The partnership has access to a wide range of reports and management information about the profile of children. This is helping the service to direct its resources towards identified need.

2.5 The report includes three areas that require improvement and one that is inadequate. The report makes four recommendation three for the YJS and one for East Sussex Police.

The East Sussex Youth Justice Service should:

1. improve the quality of assessment and planning work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others
2. ensure that management oversight is consistently effective in reviewing Asset Plus activity, so that practitioners are clear about what they need to improve
3. ensure that all children have robust contingency plans in place that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

The East Sussex Police should:

4. review the police YJS referral form so that it pays more explicit attention to diversity and trauma.

2.6 An improvement plan has been developed to address the areas for improvement. This has been shared with HMIP. The improvement plan is attached at appendix 2.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 East Sussex has maintained a focus on the key priority outcome of keeping vulnerable people safe. As set out in the report 'the YJS partnership can rightly be satisfied with many aspects of its work and celebrate the effective way that it carries this out.' We will work with the partnership to address the recommendations and deliver the best outcomes for the children and young people.

3.2 Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the inspection report and note the inspection improvement plan which has been developed to address the areas for improvement.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None