

TITLE OF REPORT: HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) Short Quality Screening (SQS) Inspection

REPORT OF: Sheila Lock, Interim Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Cabinet of the results of the HMIP SQS Inspection Report for Gateshead Youth Offending Team.

‘Overall, HMIP found that work to reduce reoffending, to protect the public, protect children and young people, and to make sure sentences were served, was of very high quality. It was encouraging to see that the work of the youth offending team had improved significantly in all areas since a previous inspection in 2010. Staff were committed and enthusiastic, and they had a detailed knowledge of the children and young people they were working with’

Background

2. The aim of the Youth Justice System is to prevent offending by children and young people. Good quality assessment and planning at the start of a sentence is critical to increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes. In May 2016 HMIP examined 14 cases of children and young people who had recently offended and were supervised by Gateshead Youth Offending Team. The examination of the cases wherever possible was undertaken in conjunction with the allocated case manager.
3. HMIP stated that the published reoffending rate for Gateshead was 32.6%. This was better than the previous year and better than the England and Wales average of 37.8%.

Inspection Results

4. HMIP found that all of the case managers interviewed had a sound understanding of the principles of effective practice, and they understood policies and procedures for the management of risk of harm, safeguarding and compliance. They all felt well supported in their work by their managers, and that their training and skills development requirements were met. Their training included, speech language and communication needs, and child sexual exploitation; and as a result Inspectors saw evidence of staff considering and responding to these factors within the cases they examined. The YOT had designated case managers as leads in certain areas, for example, looked after children, working with girls, sexual offending and transition to probation. HMIP saw clear evidence of active management oversight recorded within case records, and gate-keeping processes, for example in relation to the

quality of pre-sentencing reports. HMIP judged that quality assurance arrangements had a positive impact in most of the cases inspected.

5. Key Strengths

- High quality initial assessments of children and young people, provided a firm foundation for work to reduce future offending;
- Vulnerability assessments were of good quality, informing the work that needed to be undertaken to protect children and young people;
- Planning for work to reduce offending, manage the risk of harm posed to others, and address safeguarding and vulnerability was very good;
- Case managers engaged very well with children and young people and their parents/carers, taking diversity factors and barriers to engagement into account;
- Management oversight was effective in ensuring the quality of work.

6. Areas requiring improvement

- In a small number of cases pre-sentence reports failed to give sufficient attention to considering suitable alternatives to custody.

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that Cabinet considers and notes the positive comments made by HM Inspectorate of Probation on the work of Gateshead Youth Offending Team.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To ensure that Gateshead Youth Offending Teams is continuously improving to: reduce reoffending and protect the public.
- (ii) To protect children and young people and make sure all sentences are served to a very high quality.

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. As an independent inspectorate, HMI Probation provides assurance to Ministers and the public on the effectiveness of work with those who have offended or are likely to offend, promotes continuous improvement by the organisations that they inspect and contributes to the effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Background

2. The inspection was conducted from 23 – 25 May 2016 as part of a programme of inspection of youth offending work. The report is published on the HMI Probation website. Copies are provided to partner inspectorates to inform their inspections, and to the Youth Justice Board (YJB)

Consultation

3. The report is shared with members of the YOT Board, LSCB, Community Safety Board and Children's Trust Board.
4. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People have been consulted.

Alternative Options

5. There are no alternative options as the report supports the Youth Offending Team's duty to continuously improve and support the young people they work with.

Implications of Recommended Option

6. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, confirms that there are no financial implications arising from this report
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no immediate implications arising from the report.
 - c) **Property Implications** - There are no immediate implications arising from the report.
7. **Risk Management Implication** - There are no implications arising directly from this report.
8. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – There are no implications arising directly from this report.
9. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no specific implications arising directly from this report.

10. **Health Implications** – There are no implications arising directly as a result of this report.
11. **Sustainability Implications** – There are no implications arising directly as a result of this report.
12. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no Implications arising directly as a result of this report.
13. **Area and Ward Implications** - There are no Implications arising directly as a result of this report.
14. **Background Information**
 - HM Inspectorate of Probation Short Quality Screening Report of Youth Offending Work in Gateshead – 22 June 2016