

TITLE OF REPORT: **Gateshead Youth Justice Service**

REPORT OF: **Emma Blackwell, Team Manager, Youth Justice and Specialist Support Team.**

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the Youth Justice Service key priorities for 2021/2023 and performance against First Time Entrants (FTE), Re-offending and Custody indicators.

Background

1.The principle aim of the youth justice system established by Section 37 of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) is to prevent offending by children and young people. The Gateshead Youth Justice Service is an integral part of the Children’s Social Care and Early Help Directorate within Gateshead Council and is accountable to the Gateshead Youth Justice Board.

2.The Youth Justice Board must make sure suitable governance arrangements are in place for the Youth Justice Service. The Gateshead YJB:

- is chaired by the Director for Children,
- is responsible for ensuring the delivery of the local Youth Justice Plan, it agrees the draft Youth Justice Plan and receives progress updates as to implementation
- monitors quarterly updates from the YJS Head of Service on performance against key targets and initiative

3.The Gateshead YJB must be chaired by a Chief Officer and:

- comprise of all statutory partners and other agencies that can make a significant contribution to the youth crime prevention agenda
- ensure that Board members are at chief officer level or representatives with sufficient seniority to be able to commit resources and take necessary decisions
- ensure that Board members have corporate ownership of the YJS and the youth crime prevention agenda

4.The statutory partners are:

- the Local Authority
- Police
- Probation Service

- Health (Health is defined as a "Clinical Commissioning Group" or "Local Health Board" by the Crime and Disorder Act 1988)

Gateshead Youth Justice Service consulted with partners and agreed 9 key priorities as defined in the Strategic Plan for 2021 - 2023.

Priority 1

Ensure our young people are children first and offenders second

5. The Voice of the Child and Family needs to be at the center of the work that is carried out with our young people. Further development of this will include greater liaison with young people when making changes to the YJS. We will do this by supporting young people to take part in exit interviews and encouraging them to attend the Gateshead YJS or make a film/write an account of their experiences. We will also use the work produced by young people in public spaces. Life story work is being developed across Gateshead Children Services, case managers and advocates will have the opportunity to attend this training and apply the principles to their intervention with our young people.

Progress

6. Young people continue to be at the center of all the work we do. We have developed a young person consultant role to ensure that the views and opinions of young people are at the heart of service delivery and improvement. Recently a young person and his family attended the Gateshead Youth Justice Board to talk about their experience of the Criminal Justice System. Young people have been involved in producing work as part of reparation and awareness raising of issues linked to offending.

Priority 2

Ensure Looked After Children are not overrepresented in the Criminal Justice Service

7. Decriminalisation of LAC is a key priority and an area where there has been significant development. However, there is more work to be done and by linking up with Children's Homes, police, Independent Return workers and Social Work colleagues we can further push this agenda to avoid these children coming into the Criminal Justice system. There are plans in place to develop a psychology offer which will help us to develop the Enhanced Case management model.

Progress

8. Decriminalisation of Looked after Children meetings have taken place bimonthly and are chaired by the Youth Justice Service Manager. This group is made up from managers of Local Authority Children's Homes, Police, EDT, a manager from the Looked After Team and the Youth Justice Service. The agenda is focused on the young people within the local authority care homes and their current individual needs. As a direct result of the information shared in this group a perpetrator of sexual offences was remanded and another young person was deterred from meeting an adult male who had groomed her to meet up with him.

9. The information shared between partners has changed the way in which young people are dealt with when they go missing and joint strategies between the police and home have been put in place to support the young person's safe return.

10. In addition, neighborhood police relations have been strengthened and information has been entered onto the police intelligence system to better understand individual need leading to better outcomes.

11. The Children homes continue to support their young people and only contact police as a last option. Divert from charge and outcome 22 are also having a positive impact on the decriminalisation of Looked After Children.

12. Youth Justice Staff have attended the Children's homes to present information on the service and how we can help and support staff and young people alike.

13. Relationships between all members of the group have improved and information sharing is easier as a result.

Priority 3

14. Identify and intervene early with young people to address behaviour that could lead a young person into the Criminal Justice System.

Prevention needs to be everyone's agenda. Young people at risk of offending need to be able to access services to support their needs at the earliest opportunity. There needs to be co-ordination of what is available to young people in Gateshead.

Progress

15. The Youth Justice Service and Targeted Family Support work closely together to provide support for young people and their families at risk of offending and re-offending. Both services recently took part in a visit from the Supporting Families & Youth Justice Project, led by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This visit was to gain an understanding how we work together to deliver a whole family approach. And a report of their findings will be published in April 2022.

16. The YJS is leading on the development of a partnership handbook exploring existing resources to support prevention, targeted prevention, and diversion across Gateshead. This piece of work involves collaboration with Targeted Family Support, Community Safety, Police, Violence Reduction Unit, Fire Service, Youth Justice and Voluntary Sector services.

Not criminalising young people - Divert from Charge

17. Divert from Charge was launched in Gateshead in May 2021, it is a new referral process whereby young people are no longer charged by police unless in extreme cases, such as offences that could lead to a remand and instead, cases are referred through to a panel process before a final decision is reached. As a result of the Divert from Charge arrangement, young people are not labelled as offenders, this helps to prevent young people from forming deviant or delinquent identities that may impact on their development. The process avoids unnecessary disproportionality in the criminal justice system and enables tailored diversionary interventions which are therapeutic, targeted, and appropriate whilst avoiding the stigma of conviction.

18. There have been 30 applications for Divert from Charge so far in Gateshead. 12 have been approved and 18 have been returned to the Officer in charge of the case.

Diversion - Outcome 22

19. Outcome 22 continues to be used as an Out of Court disposal. This intervention is a deferred prosecution, meaning the young person will not come through the formal criminal justice system unless they fail to comply with the programme. This intervention has been extremely successful in reducing the number of first-time entrants.

20. In the past 12 months 192 Outcome 22 interventions have been delivered which has had a significant impact on diverting young people away from the Criminal Justice System. Only 4 young people during this time have failed to comply.

Targeted Prevention - Outreach

21. Gateshead Youth Justice Service funded The REAL (Relate, Engage and Listen) Project during the summer which delivered targeted outreach youth work in areas across the Borough for three evenings a week. The aim of the Project was to engage with young people in recognised locations of concern to offer safe faces, support, and guidance alongside signposting to specialist services. Locations of concern were identified via the multi-agency Operational Planning and Tasking Group co-ordinated by Community Safety.

Priority 4

22. Ensure education teams effectively meets the needs of young people within the criminal justice system

We are going to continue to complete deep dive education audits twice a year to be able to monitor the progress of how we are responding to the needs of children. This work will include looking at attendance, placement, exclusion and SEND. The YJS will continue to work with schools and education providers, we will also advocate on behalf of young people at the various education panels that we attend for the benefit of our children.

Progress

23. The Youth Justice Service Manager is an active member of education panels including, fair access, complex pupils, exclusion and SEND. Education, training, and employment status is assessed with each young person in YJS, and support offered in response to individual need.

24. In December 2021 a thematic review of Education, Training and Employment began. As part of the HMIP methodology all Youth Justice Services were asked to complete a short Survey. At the time of the review, the findings were as follows:-

18% of children had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

56% of young people open to the YJS were identified as having Special Educational Needs or have received SEND Support

65% of children of school age were attending a pupil referral unit or receiving alternative provision.

0% of the children of school age were not in school/a pupil referral unit/alternative provision.

52% of children over school leaving age were not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

25. The Youth Justice Service, along with IAG and education partners undertake joint reviews of education for statutory and post statutory age young people and report regularly to the Gateshead Youth Justice Board.

Priority 5

26. Promote the health and wellbeing of young people in the Youth Justice System

There is a health needs assessment of children open to YJS that has just began. A deep dive of cases has taken place in August and October with the CCG and YJS, this will help us to understand the needs of our children in Gateshead. Looking at the health needs of this cohort it is hoped that we will be able to identify what other health provision is needed within the service and work with our partners to provide some additionality.

Progress

27. An in-depth review of case files took place between the Clinical Commissioning Group and Youth Justice Service; this allowed a greater understanding of the needs of this cohort of young people. Referrals for young people to access support around mental health and emotional wellbeing are triaged via the single point of access. The Children Young People Service Community Clinical Manager sits on the Gateshead Youth Justice panel and meets with commissioners regularly to continuously review and update the on the demand for services.

28. The Clinical Commissioning Group have been working closely with the Youth Justice Service to identify training and development opportunities to upskill YJS staff and enhance the support we offer to young people. As part of this work, we are working with North East Counselling Service and Speech and Language colleagues. It is anticipated that further development of trauma informed practice will ensure we can respond to low level emotional needs of young people without having to refer or sign post them to other agencies.

29. Plans are in place to develop the Enhanced Case Management Model within YJS which would ensure young people are supported with input from psychology services. This approach has been effective in reducing offending and promoting engagement and it is fundamental to the trauma recovery model, an approach already embedded in YJS delivery.

Priority 6

30. Support young people transitioning between Children's and Adults Service

The newly formed post of a Probation Support Officer will help young adults who fall out of the transition arrangements to have the support put in place that they need to ensure compliance with probation orders and reduce re-offending. This work is being monitored by Gateshead YJS.

Progress

31. The overriding objective of the Joint National Protocol for Transitions in England and behind an effective transition process is that it should be managed safely both for the child and their community. Whilst there are limited restrictions on the type of youth statutory orders that can be transferred to the Probation Service, where the child meets the age eligibility threshold, what remains fundamental is the need to jointly assess the appropriateness of the child's transfer.

32. The seconded Probation Officer takes responsibility for the high-risk cases and young people over 16 years old who are likely to transition to the Probation Service. There are service level agreements in place and regular meetings take place to monitor this area of work. The Probation Officer within the Youth Justice Service holds appropriate cases and enhances the service that can be given to young people approaching adulthood. National review of resource modelling (2017) confirmed deployment of Probation Officer (0.7 FTE) and Probation Service Officer (0.3 FTE) to enhance the effectiveness of the joint Probation Service /Youth Justice Service delivery. In Gateshead 7 hours per week Probation Support Officer resource is allocated to support transition between youth and adult services. The Probation Service will

continue to develop its collaboration with the YJS to ensure the joint framework supports these aims.

33. Probation Officer and Probation Support Officer resource deployed to Gateshead Youth Justice Service will help young adults who fall out of the transition arrangements to have the support put in place that they need to ensure compliance with adult orders and reduce reoffending. This work is being monitored by Gateshead Youth Justice Service.

Priority 7

34. Understand and intervene with young people experiencing criminal exploitation.

County lines and the Criminal Exploitation of young people continues to be a concern. Gateshead YJS will work with voluntary and statutory partners to ensure that information is shared appropriately and resources are used to help support these vulnerable young people

Progress

35. Gateshead Youth Justice Service is an active partner at the Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficking panel. Young people at risk of exploitation are supported by the Youth Justice Service and referrals made to appropriate services. There is an ongoing Complex Abuse Enquiry in relation to several children and young people suspected in being involved in drug dealing, violence and driving offences. This group of young people are being monitored by a number of agencies to try and safeguard them and identify those exploiting them.

Priority 8

36. Understand Serious Youth Violence in Gateshead and what can be done to reduce harm to the public and manage the risk.

Knife Crime and the use of weapons will feature in the intervention planning that we do in the coming 24 months.

Progress

37. Gateshead Youth Justice Service along with partners have completed a stocktake of serious youth violence. The Serious Youth Violence (SYV) Stocktake is an optional method of self-assessment that provides YJS managers with the opportunity and means to reflect on the service they and their partners provide. It is designed to help them see gaps and strengths in work and reduce serious youth violence. The data showed some areas where further work can be completed to develop our response to Serious Youth Violence. Northumbria Police are currently being inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in relation to Serious Youth Violence, the Gateshead Youth Justice Service Manager has been interviewed as part of this work.

38. Offence performance information is regularly scrutinised by the performance subgroup and Gateshead Youth Justice Board. Performance information from January to December 2021 is below, this information is split to consider the offending of Looked After Children.

Offence Type	LAC		Non-Lac	
	No.	%	No.	%
Arson	1	1%	0	0%
Criminal Damage	5	5%	4	4%

Domestic Burglary	1	1%	2	2%
Drugs	0	0%	5	5%
Motoring Offences	0	0%	26	28%
Public Order	2	2%	6	6%
Racially Aggravated	0	0%	2	2%
Sexual Offences	0	0%	1	1%
Theft And Handling Stolen Goods	1	1%	3	3%
Vehicle Theft / Unauthorised Taking	1	1%	4	4%
Violence Against The Person	10	11%	19	20%
Totals:	21	23%	72	77%

Priority 9

39. Build our understanding of the specific problems faced by young people in Gateshead

Disproportionality of Black, Asian and minority ethnic children will continue to be monitored through the performance subgroup and reported to the board.

Progress

40. Gateshead's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) estimates that around 3.7% (7,500) of the population are from a black and minority ethnic (BAME) group. The BAME population has increased from around 1.6% in 2001. In order to understand if BAME children were over-represented in the Gateshead some work was undertaken to profile the ethnicity of those children and young people who were involved with Gateshead Youth Justice Service between April 2017 and August 2020. The local analysis showed that between April 2017 and August 2020:

- 672 children and young people were open to the service, of which 19 (2.8%) had a BAME background
- 2.8% with a BAME background is lower than the Gateshead BAME population estimate of 3.7% in the JSNA, suggesting BAME young people are not overrepresented in the Gateshead YJS cases

Performance Update

41. The latest data for April 2021 to March 2022 shows the 12-month rate of Custody for Gateshead at 0.06, this represents 1 custodial sentence in the 12-month period. This is significant reduction on the previous 12 months.

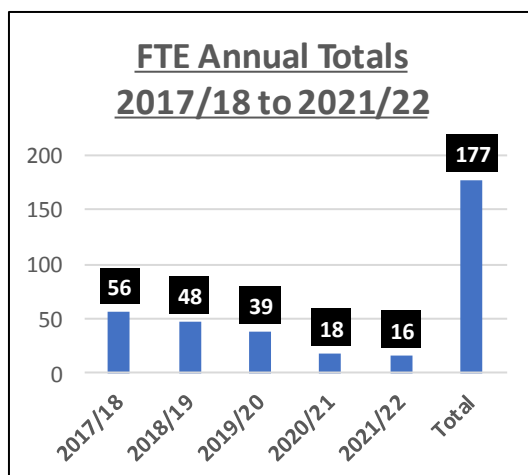
April 2021 to March 2022							
	Apr – Jun	Jul – Sep	Court Disposals for period	Oct – Dec	Jan - Mar	Court Disposals for period	Total
No of YPs	0	1	59	0	-	28	1
Custody Rate	0	0.06		0	-		0.06
April 2020 to March 2021							
	Apr – Jun	Jul – Sep	Court Disposals for period	Oct – Dec	Jan - Mar	Court Disposals for period	Total
No of YPs	0	1	84	1	2	88	4
Custody Rate	0	0.06		0.06	0.12		0.24

Re-Offending

42. The cohort is made up of 118 young people (young people receiving all Out of Court Disposals and court sentences). The tracker is live and at this point only 3 young people have re-offended. This rate compares favourably with other years but will need to be monitored over time for an accurate reflection on the previous data.

Cohort	No. of Young People	No. Young People Reoffending	No. of Young People NOT re-offending	Re-offending %	No. of further offences	Reoffences Per Reoffender Rate
2021/22 Statutory	28	2	26	8%	5	2.5
2021/22 - Non-Statutory	90	1	89	1.1%	1	1
2021/22 - Combined	118	3	115	2.54%	6	2

First Time entrant have dropped significantly since the introduction of Outcome 22.



Recommendations

43. The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to;

- (i) Continue to request regular updates on the key priorities.
- (ii) Consider what can be done by the Corporate Parenting Board to support the Gateshead Youth Justice Board.
- (iii) Note and comment on the contents of this report.
- (iv) Identify any areas of work which the committee would be interested in receiving updates about.

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