

**Title of Report: HMIP Inspection of Youth Justice Services in Gateshead**

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**Purpose of the report**

- 1 The Gateshead Youth Justice Service works with children and young people in the criminal justice system to prevent offending and reoffending behaviour as well as supporting victims.
- 2 This report summarises the recent HMIP inspection of Youth Justice Services in Gateshead and outlines recommendations and next steps.

**Background**

- 3 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. HMIP is the independent source of fair comment for ministers and the public on the effectiveness of the work of probation and youth justice providers.
- 4 On 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023, HMIP announced the intention to carry out an inspection of youth justice services in Gateshead during the week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- 5 The inspection covered key domains:
  - Organisational Delivery
  - Court Disposals
  - Out of Court Disposals
  - Resettlement
- 6 The inspection found that Gateshead Youth Justice Service was rated 'Good' overall while rating its 'implementation and delivery' as 'Outstanding', due to the way high-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.
- 7 The full inspection report can be found here [An inspection of youth offending services in Gateshead \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/youth-offending/gateshead/)

**Proposal and/or Issues for consideration**

- 8 The inspection found many strengths at Gateshead Youth Justice Service not least:
  - Youth justice staff have established positive relationships with children under their supervision and their parents or carers.
  - The service for children in the care of the local authority, or who are considered particularly vulnerable, is prioritised and they are provided with bespoke support.

- Board members are invested in and advocate for the YJS and a child-centred and holistic approach is reflected throughout the partnership.
  - The management team and senior leadership are visible. Staff understand lines of accountability and feel strong support is offered to them.
  - The workforce is stable, and staff are confident, experienced, and knowledgeable.
  - Staff are motivated and passionate and there is a genuine commitment from all staff to achieve the best outcomes for children, families, and victims.
  - There is a strong relationship with children's social care, which enables staff to take a coordinated and collaborative approach to addressing children's needs.
  - The voices of children, families and victims are continually heard at the board and used to influence service delivery.
- 9 A total of seven recommendations have been made to Gateshead YJS. The Gateshead Youth Justice Service should:
- (a) further develop data analysis processes to proactively explore and scrutinise trends in data. Findings should be used to shape service delivery
  - (b) develop processes to enable systematic evaluation of service delivery to provide an evidence base and clear understanding of the impact of provision
  - (c) review resettlement policy and provision to ensure that provision and practice consistently meets children's needs.
- 10 The management board should:
- (d) work with the YJS to further develop its diversity strategy and capture this in guidance and processes. The management board should also support the YJS in embedding its strategy and ensure that managers and practitioners are trained and supported to deliver it
  - (e) continue to work with the partnership to ensure that children have quick access to specialist mental health provision
  - (f) ensure that the pathway to speech, language and communication provision is fully embedded, allowing quick access for YJS children
  - (g) continue to work with the YJS and its partners to further develop their response to ensuring all children have access to appropriate education, training, and employment (ETE) provision. This should include improving data analysis and escalation routes to assist effective challenge when there are concerns about ETE provision.

## **Communications Implications**

- 11 HMIP published the report in a national press release on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023. A news article was subsequently published on the Gateshead Council website

## Recommendations

- 12 The Gateshead Youth Justice Service and Partnership Board will respond to the recommendations as follows:
- (a) Review the remit of the existing Performance Subgroup to ensure data is effectively scrutinised and analysed to ensure the needs of our children are fully understood and that these findings shape service delivery.
  - (b) Continue to have an active role in the review and evaluation of local, regional and national initiatives whilst further developing our in-house process to better understand the impact that Youth Justice Service involvement has had for children and their families.
  - (c) Review our resettlement policy and provision to develop clear guidance in relation to preparing children for release. This will include the responsibilities of the partnership to ensure robust and effective resettlement provision across wellbeing, accommodation, education, training, and employment.
  - (d) Strengthen our understanding of diversity, equality and inclusion across all protected factors through training and development whilst reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure our approach to diversity is transparent.
  - (e) Implement an initial speech, language and communication screening process for every young person coming into Youth Justice Service and strengthen our partnership arrangements and pathways to support with CAMHS, CYPS and North East Counselling to ensure young people have direct access to the appropriate counselling and support for emotional health issues.
  - (f) Work with Trusting Hands GATESHEAD to ensure that young people have quick access to specialist mental health provision and pathways into speech, language and communication provision is fully embedded.
  - (g) Establish an education lead worker within YJS and collaborate with education partners to strengthen the education offer for young people and ensure they receive appropriate and effective provision to meet individual need.
- 13 These actions will form a development plan which will to be submitted to HMIP as part of the inspection process.
- 14 The recommendations will be incorporated into the priorities in the Gateshead Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2023 – 2024.

## Consultees:

The following officers have been consulted on the preparation of this report:  
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