



Report of the Cabinet Member for Care Services

Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel 12th March 2024

Youth Justice Service

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide an update on the developments within Swansea Youth Justice Service (YJS)
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report includes a summary of the recent developments and progress within the Youth Justice Service The report includes the Swansea Youth Justice Service Performance Report for quarter 3
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorse the report and its conclusions
Lead Councillor(s)	Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services
Lead Officer(s)	David Howes, Director of Social Services Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services
Report Author	Helen Williams, Principal Officer for Adolescent and Young People Services Helen.williams3@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer	N/A
Finance Officer	N/A
Access to Services Officer	N/A

1. Background

- 1.1 Swansea Youth Justice Service is a multi-agency statutory service made up of staff from the Local Authority, Police, National Probation Service and Health. The service supports children and young people between the ages of 10 and 17 who are subject to statutory Court Orders or are on the periphery of becoming involved in the criminal justice system.
- 1.2 Approximately 80% of the work undertaken by the Youth Justice Service sits within Prevention and Early Intervention. The service works closely with partner agencies to engage relevant children and young people at the earliest opportunity. Proportionate assessments are undertaken for every child or young person to ensure interventions are specific and focused on identified individual needs.
- 1.3 The service is required to regularly report performance data to the Youth Justice Board and Swansea Youth Justice Management Board, chaired by the Director of Social Services and attended by key stakeholders. The most recent performance report is added as **Appendix 1**, for reference.
- 1.4 Since the last update to scrutiny in March 2023, the Youth Justice Services has been continually developing and part of the development process has been a system review. The focus of the review has been to understand better the experiences of children and young people who engage with the service and whether the service is effective in understanding what matters to them and whether they are supported to achieve positive outcomes. The review has primarily focused on the prevention work undertaken by the service.
- 1.5 The service continues to improve practice and performance in line with the action and improvement plan developed from the recommendations following the HMIP inspection in 2021.
- 1.6 Following an inspection by HMIP in October 2021, the service has been continuing to improve practice and performance in line with the action and improvement plan developed from the recommendations made.
- 1.7 The following report will outline the progress and developments of the Youth Justice Service in line with the system review and action and improvement plan.

2. Briefing

- 2.1 Over the past 12 months the system review has continued to provide the opportunity for evaluation of the Youth Justice Service and is enabling us to understand the service better from the perspective of the

children/young people, parent/carers and victims who access the service. From our learning, we are piloting a new process for receiving referrals for prevention interventions. This process involves a consultation with the referrer, young person and their parent/carer with a view to determine that the YJS is the right service and to understand what matters to the young person at the earliest opportunity as well as what they hope to achieve from accessing the service. This process also allows for consideration to be given to who the right person would be to work with the young person, dependant on needs and the outcomes that are hoped to be achieved.

2.2 Early indications are that this new process is having a positive impact in identifying need which in turn is enabling work to begin in a timely way. Where it is identified that the YJS is not the right service to meet the need, signposting is also undertaken immediately, resulting in less delay in the right service being provided. Additionally, having referrers involved in the consultation is providing the opportunity for partner agencies to have a clearer understanding of the work the YJS do and a clearer understanding of when it is appropriate to refer in. This pilot will continue, and our hope is that we will start to gather data to evidence the positive impact this new process is having.

2.3 In addition to the system review, the service has continued to develop its work in a number of areas. One of these is the development of the Turnaround project following the additional funding from the Ministry of Justice to enhance the prevention work already in place and to focus on supporting children and young people involved in or on the cusp of anti-social or offending behaviour. The team have a dedicated project worker assigned to this project as well as oversight from our Prevention and Early Intervention Practice Lead. The service is required to work with a total of 97 children and young people through the duration of the project (November 2022-March 2025).

To date, we have worked with 42 young people over the 2023/24 period. We have been successful in achieving outcomes for young people outlined by the project and engaging them in support. Specifically, group sessions encompassing outdoor pursuits, diversionary activity and offending interventions have run for each cohort during each quarter. Each young person has also benefited individually with ten gym passes being issued, support with transport, sport equipment/clothing being provided for young people part of football or rugby teams and other items provided for sport related activity. Photography and music equipment has also provided creative sessions for young people in group and one to one interventions.

Vocational support has also been a main focus of the project, for individuals working towards a YAA in woodwork; tools, equipment and safety wear has been provided with the view of young people achieving valued qualifications. Safety work wear and other equipment has been provided for young people on vocational training or college courses.

Intake criteria has primarily included those involved in repeated ASB and those released under investigation or receiving bail support. Recordable outcomes achieved have mainly included sports-based recreation, education and vocation, music and arts-based recreation, mentoring and supportive relationships and practical life skills.

- 2.4 As part of our ongoing work in relation to anti-social behaviour, the service is working closely with our partners in education and have recently been involved in a pilot programme within six Primary Schools. The focus of this programme was to deliver targeted anti-social behaviour sessions to year 5 and 6 pupils to educate them as early as possible. The sessions delivered were interactive and educative. Feedback is currently being gathered from the schools with a view of this programme being rolled out to all primary schools across the Authority. Anecdotal feedback from the pilot schools was that the programme was successful and welcomed by the schools.
- 2.5 In addition to the work being undertaken within prevention, the service has also continued to develop in the work within early intervention. The service has seen an increase in recent months in the number of children and young people attending Youth Bureau. Young people attend the Bureau following a first offence or low-level offence where they have accepted their involvement and are remorseful for their actions. The process enables children and young people to receive support from the YJS without the need to attend Court. Children and young people going through this process are involved in an assessment to determine areas of need and an intervention plan will be developed to meet this need and to seek to divert away from any further offending behaviour.
- 2.6 The service is currently looking at how the Bureau process can be developed to enhance multi agency involvement in the decision-making process. The Bureau panel is currently made up of Police, Youth Justice Service and an independent volunteer, the hope is to have a multi-agency panel where all relevant agencies can contribute to the intervention planning and provide holistic support to children and young people in the areas that may impact on their risk of offending. This is being considered on a regional basis in line with our police force area.
- 2.7 A further recent development has been the Drive for Change programme which has been developed regionally from partnership working between South Wales Police, South and Fire Service and the Youth Justice Services in Swansea and Neath/Port Talbot, with the support of Swansea Magistrates Court. The programme is specifically designed to educate children and young people involved in motoring offences, of which there has been an increase evidenced in the data over the past few quarters. Until recently, all motoring offences had to be heard before the Court, meaning that children and young people were unable to be considered at Bureau and in many cases were receiving fines which did not provide the opportunity to work with the

Youth Justice Service. These young people are now able to be considered at Youth Bureau to access this programme. Elements of the programme are also available to children and young people who are open under statutory interventions and this forms part of their intervention plans.

- 2.8 The Safeguarding Lead has developed a Knife Crime awareness questionnaire. This is now being rolled out to gather a thematic understanding of young people's experiences around this issue. The information collected will be reviewed, and if appropriate individual/group discussions will be held with young people to further understand what it is currently like for young people living in Swansea. This information will help to develop the interventions run in the service and can also feed into the multi-agency response around this issue.
- 2.9 Where contextual risk is identified, the team work closely with agencies as part of the Contextual, Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Team (CMET) to develop a multi-agency response. With our contextual work, we focus, not just on working with children, young people and agencies, but also with families and wider support networks. How we involve families in processes and planning is key to developing safety and achieving change. We continually work in partnership in relation to this area of practice to ensure that the correct support is available at the right time to safeguard children and young people.
- 2.10 The service has continued to develop participation of our children and young people in service development. Feedback from children and young people is gathered at all stages of service operation. The service now has a Youth Participation Forum, which gives young people a voice in the planning of activities and programmes the service develop and deliver. The service feel that it is integral to provide young people an opportunity to share their views to those who fundamentally make decisions that affect their lives.
- 2.11 A few of the young people have been supported to develop a pod cast which they have used to share their stories and experiences of working with the service. The young people are hoping to be able to develop this further through undertaking interviews with key staff across the service in respect of how young people who have been involved in offending behaviour can be supported to access positive opportunities.
- 2.12 The Youth Justice Service continues to build upon and develop positive working relationships with partner agencies. The service holds fortnightly drop-in sessions with Careers Wales and three weekly consultations with the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) team to identify and target young people who are at risk of or who are currently NEET. The team also has positive links with local colleges and training providers.

- 2.13 The service has a Speech and Language and CAMHS provision shared regionally with Neath/Port Talbot Youth Justice Service. Both provide an invaluable resource and support to both children and young people and staff within the service and enable interventions to be better tailored to meet individual need.
- 2.14 The Youth Justice Service continues to work out of two separate buildings in two different areas of Swansea. Over the past 12 months efforts have been made to identify a building within Swansea where the whole service could be located in one place. This would be more conducive to team development and would be significantly better for the children and young people we work with. To date we have been unsuccessful in identifying an alternative building however efforts are ongoing.

3. Conclusions/Key Points Summary

- 3.1 There have been continued positive developments within the Youth Justice Service, the system review has provided the opportunity for developments within prevention work which seek to improve the experience for children and young people as well as improving understanding of the service across partner agencies.
- 3.2 Key developments in direct work continue to be evidenced and the participation of children and young people in developing the service is prioritised and progressing.
- 3.3 The service is currently working on improving the process in respect of Bureau to include more effective multi agency working. Overall partnership working is positive and close connections with our NEET team, SALT services and Careers Wales is proving effective in engaging young people.
- 3.4 Ongoing efforts will be made to secure a new building for the service which allows the whole service to be located in one place.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 None

5. Finance Implications

- 5.1 None

6. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 6.1 None

Glossary of terms: None

Background papers: None

Appendices:

1. Swansea Youth Justice Service Performance Report, Quarter 3