



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

### Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

#### Swansea Youth Justice Services Progress Report and Update

<b>Purpose</b>	To inform scrutiny on the Youth Justice Services development since it was disaggregated in April 2019, including the last quarter's performance data.
<b>Content</b>	<p>This report provides Councillors with an update on the progress of Swansea Youth Justice Team since the HMP inspection report in March 2019.</p> <p>The report includes the revised Improvement and Action Plan and the Swansea Youth Justice Performance Report for quarter 3.</p>
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	Consider and comment on progress made towards improvement and in addressing the concerns identified post inspection.
<b>Lead Councillor(s)</b>	Councillor Elliott King
<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	David Howes (Director of Social Services) Julie Davies (Head of Child and Family Services)
<b>Report Author</b>	Jay McCabe Principal Officer Bays+ and Youth Justice Services

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1. In April 2019, Swansea Youth Justice Service (SYJS) was formed as a result of the disaggregation of Western Bay Youth Justice Service (WBYJS) in March 2019. Prior to April 2019, Western Bay YJS consisted of three Local Authorities working within a regional partnership. This included Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Youth Offending Teams. The merger occurred on 29 May 2014 with Bridgend CBC being the lead authority. Whilst the spirit of regional working was at the heart of the merger, the oversight of the region proved complex and in effect, the regional service functioned as three distinct teams with separate cultures. The result of the inspection in November 2018 highlighted these challenges and in particular the challenge the regional management board had in terms of oversight of all three regions.
- 1.2. In April 2019, Swansea disaggregated and formed its own service within the larger umbrella of Child and Family Services. It has since set up its own management board which is chaired by Swansea Council's Director of Social Services, Dave Howes and has a membership in line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which includes Cabinet Members from Swansea Council – Councillor Elliott King.
- 1.3. Since April 2019, the Youth Justice Service has continued to focus its energies on developing and improving its service in line with the HMIP Inspection and Improvement Plan. Furthermore, to develop its service to deliver improved services for children and young people specifically in Swansea. A copy of the Improvement and Action Plan is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4. Swansea Youth Justice Service is a statutory multi-agency partnership whose legal duty is to co-operate in order to secure Youth Justice Services appropriate to their area. The service is funded, from a variety of sources including UK Government, Welsh Government (WG) and the statutory partners. (E.g. the Local Authority, Police, the National Probation Service and Health).

## **2.0 Youth Justice Plan**

- 2.1. Due to the impact of Covid in 2020-2021, the Youth Justice Service was required to submit two plans to the Youth Justice board during that time. The first plan was the business continuity plan and the second was the business recovery plan. These plans were ratified and approved at previous Swansea Youth Justice Board meetings prior to submission and approved by the Youth Justice Board.
- 2.2. The Annual Youth Justice Plan for 2021-2022 is due to be approved at the next board meeting in June 2021. The plan will be submitted to the

Youth Justice Board for England and Wales which oversees the Youth Justice System. The production of a Youth Justice Plan is a statutory duty of the Local Authority under Part 3, Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The plan sets out how Youth Justice Services are to be provided and funded; how the Youth Justice Service, established by the local authority, is to be composed and funded; how it will operate and what function it is to carry out. The plan is the medium term business plan for the Swansea Youth Justice Service and sets out its aims of quality service delivery and continuous improvement.

- 2.2 The Youth Justice Plan for 2019/20 outlines how services will be delivered to meet key performance indicators as well as work with victims, workforce development, safeguarding, risk management and participation. The plan forms part of the overall information held in relation to Youth Justice Services nationally. The plan has to be accepted by the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice.

### **3.0 Performance of Swansea Youth Justice Service**

- 3.1 Since the formation of Swansea Youth Justice Service from April 2019, the service has continued to collate its own performance data over the last two years and this provides a picture both locally and in comparison to national trends. Previously this was part of the Western Bay region. Please see **Appendix 2** for a copy of the last quarter's performance data report which the management board had sight of in January 2021. This is the first time Swansea has had sufficient local data to analyse and make comparisons against. Therefore, a more accurate picture is continuing to be provided in future data performance reports.

### **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Since our last report, the service has continued to move in a positive direction. The service now has an operational manager in place and they have been in post for 16 months. Furthermore, with a small uplift in Youth Justice Board grant funding, the service developed the additional Senior Practitioner role to become a Practice Lead in the service. This has continued to create additionality within the service by driving practice quality throughout, particularly in the arena of safeguarding. Also, the planned investment of Asset Plus training has now taken place and we recently secured some additional funding from YOS Cymru to invest in further training around assessing and working with sexualised risk (AIM3). This will strengthen the services ability to offer assessments and work programmes around sexualised risks for young people. As the funding is already in place, this will mean there are no additional financial implications to the Local Authority to deliver this.

A further investment is the mobilisation of a regional Speech and Language service which will be led by Swansea. This investment is going to be provided by additional Community and Children's Grant funding which specifically comes under the 'Promoting Positive Engagement' grant. This will mean grant funding will be used to invest in this service and won't impact the Local Authority's core budget.

5.2 The levels of grant funding available to Youth Justice Services like many other grant funded services are uncertain for the coming years. However, Swansea Youth Justice Service has continued to secure Youth Justice Board funding and over the two year period, there has been a small increase in the funding, and we have continued to secure Promoting Positive Engagement (Welsh Government) and Police Crime Commissioner funding for a further year.

## 6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The focus of the service since the last report to scrutiny has been around implementing the actions of the HMIP inspection and improvement plan. The plan is continually reviewed every 6 months to ensure the service continues to raise the standards and ensure we are compliant with the improvement plan actions. A number of key improvements are detailed below:

- The service has consistently ensured that assessments are being completed within timescales over the last quarter. We continue to focus on the quality of assessments, reports and plans to ensure the service consistently delivers improved outcomes for children and young people. Please refer to **Appendix 3** for case studies.
- Supervisions are being completed consistently with all staff every month. We continue to focus on the quality of supervision with a focus on developing staff and building confidence.
- All policies and procedures are up to date and reviewed and in place.
- Closer working links are in place with education colleagues which has recently resulted in the development of a local policy for literacy and numeracy.
- A part time CAMHS nurse is in post which enables us to provide children and young people with appropriate mental health services and a pathway when required.
- The service continues to focus on improving the quality of service to children and young people concentrating on developing robust assessments, quality assurance processes and reviewing interventions.
- The completion of the National Standards Audit 2019. The service was given feedback by the Youth Justice Board that they were pleased with the detailed action plan in relation to this piece of work and this meant the Youth Justice Board did not need to carry out any checks in relation to this piece of work.

6.2 Moving forward, the service has set itself a realistic and achievable plan for service delivery over the next twelve months; however, the risks that come with grant-funded posts are always present. The focus for this period (2021-2022) will be:-

- The mobilisation of the Speech and Language Service as of the end of April 2021.
- The transfer of all grade 7 staff (non-qualified) over to asset plus system. This will ensure that all future assessments from July 2021 will be carried out using this assessment format as we move away from any screening tools previously used. This is to enhance and improve the quality of assessments carried out by any non-qualified staff in the service.
- The alignment of all grade 7 staff under one standardised job description. This will enable the service to develop improved resilience amongst this cohort and broaden the range of skills and expertise across the workforce.
- The development of a quality assurance framework and audit plan. This piece of work will be completed by the end of May and will evidence the ongoing quality assurance sampling of all aspects of the service to continue to ensure the service improves and develops

6.3 As raised in the last scrutiny, the disaggregation of the service into Swansea highlighted the need to develop increased resilience within the service by promoting skills and expertise where previously staff had specialised roles which left the service vulnerable. This is part of our ongoing journey; phase 1 of the journey has resulted in all social workers within the service being engaged in activities. Phase 2 is the alignment of the project workers within the service to be able to adopt the same approach. This process will take place by July 2021. Two thirds of our non-qualified staff are already upskilled and completing prevention asset plus assessments. The move towards a generic and multi-skilled workforce has already resulted in the reduction of risks to service delivery particularly when sickness can be an issue. This has already strengthened the workforce within the service. We continue to monitor and review this process regularly.

6.4 Since the appointment of the operational manager from December 2019, both the Principal Officer and Operational Manager have continued to drive the improvement of quality throughout the service. Both roles are well integrated within Child & Family services and take part in a number of forums including contextual safeguarding,

6.5 The Youth Justice Board continues to oversee and assist Swansea to prepare for the next HMIP inspection. The service will also undertake its own mock inspection preparation in September 2021 to ensure its inspection readiness. This will include reviewing the work of the service but also preparing the board and its members in the coming months.