

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE
4 FEBRUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

UPDATE ON BRIDGEND YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Committee on progress with implementing the Bridgend Youth Justice Service improvement plan which was developed following a Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspection of Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service in December 2018.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective/objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Bridgend Youth Justice Service (Bridgend YJS) is a statutory multi-agency partnership that has a legal duty to co-operate in order to secure appropriate local youth justice services. The service is funded from a variety of sources

including UK Government, Welsh Government and statutory partners (ie Bridgend County Borough Council, South Wales Police, the Probation Service and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board).

3.2 Statutory duties to prevent offending are outlined in criminal justice and civil legislation. The principle aim of Youth Justice Services in England and Wales is to prevent offending and re-offending by young people in accordance with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Local authorities in Wales also have statutory duties to provide preventative services contained in Section 15 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Local authorities must provide services to:

- encourage children not to commit offences;
- avoid the need for children to be placed in secure accommodation; and
- enable people to live their lives as independently as possible.

3.3 The Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service (WBYJEIS) was subject to a full joint inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in December 2018, the findings of which were published in March 2019. The inspection concluded that the WBYJEIS received an overall rating of inadequate. The findings of the HMIP inspection concluded that nine of the twelve inspection domains were rated as inadequate, one was adequate, one was good and one was outstanding. The inspection report is available online at www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk .

3.4 On 19 April 2019, Cabinet agreed to the disaggregation of the WBYJEIS and that the new arrangement would be for the Bridgend's Youth Justice Service to sit within the portfolio of an existing group manager within the Education and Family Support directorate.

3.5 The service continues to be subject to monitoring by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and significant scrutiny from a variety of sources including UK Government and Welsh Government. However, due to the impact of COVID-19 it is presently unknown when a re-inspection of Bridgend YJS will be undertaken.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 A restructure of Bridgend YJS was concluded in September 2019. This restructure led to the service becoming a part of the Integrated Multi-Agency Prevention of Complex Cases Teams (IMPACCT) hub working closely with the edge of care teams. This move has provided better joint working, sharing of skills and resources and reduced duplication of work for children, young people and families. The restructure also led to the creation of lead practitioner posts which provide the service with the opportunity to deliver robust supervision, quality assurance of work and line management of staff. These were areas highlighted within the inspection as a cause for concern. The lead practitioner posts were recruited to in October 2019, with both lead practitioners in post in January 2020.

- 4.2 Quality assurance work has commenced within the service. Feedback from this has highlighted that there is an improving picture in respect of the quality of assessments. However, further work in addressing risk of harm and safety and wellbeing has been identified. In response to this, independent training approved by the YJB has been commissioned to support staff in this area. In addition to assessments, development of need led plans that are timely and address issues highlighted within assessments has also been identified as an area for improvement. Developing interventions and programmes that reduce risks of re-offending are also ongoing areas for the service to enhance.
- 4.3 The lead practitioners have begun to implement approaches in response to the above. This has included the Bridgend YJS being involved in practice issues sessions with other services. In these sessions sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise takes place between staff within edge of care teams and the Bridgend YJS with particular focus on evidenced based practice. Furthermore, a partnership has been built with a local community organisation offering young people known to the service the opportunity to engage in a six to eight week programme using sport to improve social and emotional skills. Closer links with the Fire Service has also been developed leading to opportunities for young people to engage in fire cadets. Developing these areas provides the service with support that can assist young people in reducing their risks of offending or anti-social behaviour, areas that were identified within the inspection report as inadequate.
- 4.4 Bridgend YJS has improved relationships with partners since the restructure in 2019. This has led to the appointment of a specialist health worker into the service. This was an area identified within the inspection as a cause for concern. Relationships with the Probation Service are also improving with monthly meetings being held to review young people transitioning to adulthood and ensuring support needs continue. The Bridgend YJS relationship and joint working with children's social care is also improving with better representation at risk management meetings between the two agencies. This ensures that the needs of young people and their families are being addressed and the risk of duplication is reduced.
- 4.5 A self-assessment of the Bridgend YJS was conducted in April 2020. Areas identified for improvement have been added to the Improvement Plan attached at appendix 1. Areas identified within this plan include the ongoing improvement of assessments, support plans, interventions, partnership working and evaluation and feedback forms from young people.
- 4.6 There have been a number of challenges as part of the improvement journey for the Bridgend YJS, in particular the impact COVID-19 has had on the pace of progress in addressing some of the practice issues. The service, like others, had to adapt to restrictions and develop practice and support not commonly offered to children, young people and their families. It is positive to report that a number of staff within the service adapted to this and supported the authority with some of the priorities at that time ie childcare hubs and free school meal deliveries. However, COVID-19 has impacted on the lead practitioners' ability

to affect change in some areas due to remote working, changes in practice, staff sickness for example.

4.7 Attached at appendix 2 is the performance framework report which is considered at monthly Youth Justice Service Management Board meetings. The Management Board is jointly chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Communities. Terms of reference for the Management Board are attached at appendix 3.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality implications directly arising from this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 Summary on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment is listed below:

Long-term	The long term aim of the service is to improve outcomes for children, young people and families by reducing first-time entrants into the youth justice system, reducing re-offending rates and reducing the use of custody for young people.
Prevention	The focus of the service is to prevent offending and re-offending by young people under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
Integration	The service is a multi-agency partnership where integration is key to good service delivery arrangements.
Collaboration	Collaboration will be critical to deliver the inspection recommendations.
Involvement	Participation and engagement arrangements will be strengthened as part of the new working arrangements.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications linked to this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- notes the contents of the report; and

- provides comments/recommendations.

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Background documents: HM Inspectorate of Probation – an inspection of youth offending services in Western Bay