

Update of the Cabinet Member for Young People & Culture Children, Schools and Families Committee – July 2024

1. Purpose of the Cabinet Member update

- 1.1 This paper provides a short round of updates from across the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture. It presents an opportunity for the cabinet member to speak directly to the CSF Scrutiny Committee and highlight key pieces of work, both to share successes and identify challenges and opportunities in the coming months.

The Committee are invited to consider the information below and ask questions of clarification at the meeting, subject to the Chair's discretion. Requests for additional information can be addressed to the relevant director/s outside of the meeting. The Committee may also use the cabinet member updates to inform their scrutiny work planning for the coming year.

2. Data and Performance

- 2.1 In January 2024, Camden's updated Youth Justice Plan was approved by the Full Council. Moving forward, we are keen to include more data and performance within Member reports, linked to the Youth Justice Plan KPIs. Below is a summary of the most recent data for 2023/24:

- **Low numbers of First-time entrants to the youth justice system** - 34 children became first time entrants during April 2023 to March 2024. This is an increase on the previous year, but still lower than numbers between 2016 – 2022.
- **Zero custodial sentences** – for the last two years running, no children have received custodial sentences.
- **Reoffending rate – 17.6%** (the most recent available data is October 2020 – September 2021). 15 of the 85 children re-offended within this time. This was a decrease on the previous year with a small increase in the number of reoffences from 2.38% to 3.53%.
- **Outcomes at leaving custody** - 82% (41/50) of children were in Education, Training or Employment, at the end of their order. This is a strong outcome that we continue to strive to increase.

2.2 Other key achievements in 2023/24

- **Disproportionality work** - Annual data shows an increase in the use of Out of Court Disposals for black and mixed children diverting them away from the formal youth justice system, and a reduction in the over assessing of risk and the under assessing of the individual's safety and wellbeing. This demonstrates some changes in practice are happening to reduce the overrepresentation of black and mixed children in the criminal justice system.
- **Education, Training and Employment programme**– improved and expanded offer and working partnerships, with over 9 paid work experience placements including our in-house Employability Project, Honest Grind Coffee.

- **Peer Advocates** – Three young people have been recruited and employed as Peer Advocates in the Youth Justice Service. This role is for young people aged 16-19 with recent experience of a Camden service that makes a difference to young people's lives like Early Help, YOS and Camden's Youth Centres. Peer Advocates draw on their lived experience to empower young people to find their voice, acquire new skills, and learn how to plan and partner effectively with their parents/caregivers and service providers. They work with staff in the Youth Justice service to reflect on how children are supported by the service and contribute ideas to develop it including various activities and programmes aimed at preventing young people from entering the Criminal Justice System.
- **New Youth Justice Service reception space opened, co-designed with children** - The space has been transformed into a welcoming safe place for children. There are five meeting rooms, a CAMHS room, and a spacious waiting area with a wide range of information about other services available. Now, every individual who arrives for their appointment will have access to food, snacks, and a drink before their session to ensure they feel comfortable and relaxed. Children involved in the co-design have been taking photographs of the borough which will feature on the walls and a new mosaic logo has been co-designed by one of the children involved as part of their reparation activity. Their artwork and ideas continue to be welcomed by the service, and we hope this involvement leads to the cohort feeling more connected to the service in the future.

2.3 This data combined with both local and national drivers have reinforced the following **service priorities for 2024/25** agreed at the Youth Justice Event:

1. *Maintain and continue the work on tackling Disproportionality.*
2. *Maintain and encourage better use of ETE opportunities/interventions.*
3. *Continue to invest in the staff teams' development and wellbeing.*
4. *Evaluate and evidence Camden interventions and approaches.*
5. *Continue to use feedback from children and families to improve the service.*
6. *Strengthen the Prevention Approach provided within the YJS.*
7. *Responding to social inequality.*

2.4 The National Youth Justice Board has a new oversight framework in place for all Youth Justice Services in the country. Camden has been graded 'Quadrant 1' meaning 'Strong Performer' and is in the top quartile nationally. We have a strong Youth Justice Plan and Standards for Children in Youth Justice delivered well across the board with a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' inspection outcome from HMIP.

3. Events

Youth Justice Event

- Held on the 16th May this event was a valuable opportunity to bring together senior Council officers, Councillors, colleagues across services, the Youth Justice Team and peer advocates to share learning and engage in discussion to review the priorities of the Youth Justice Plan.
- The session launched the new Youth Justice Service reception space in the Crowndale Centre, outlined headline data and contained workshops, presentation and discussion about key issues including employment and participation.

- The event has led to finalising the commitments and service priorities got the Youth Justice Service plan as detailed above.

Camden Youth Mission

- A **Members Session** in March focused on young people in the Youth Justice System and Care-experienced. The session heard from those with lived experience and the group agreed a set of pledges to ask partners about.
- **Break-out sessions at the We Make Camden Summit** – This annual event brings together partners across the borough to review the We Make Camden plan. As part of the event, we held a **Youth Mission break-out room** and asked partners to support the delivery of an annual Primary School Careers Conference, to create paid internships in their organisations and ring fence them for the 5 priority cohorts of the Youth Mission: *young people in Youth Justice System, care-experienced young people, young people with an EHCP, Disabled young people and school non-attenders*.
- The session also asked partners including the VCS to pledge support for interns within their organisational expertise. The event was well received, and the next step is to reconvene with partners to work through how to spend £20,000 of Mission Catalyst Fund attached to the session.

Youth Safety

- On 22nd May, we had the first Camden Youth Safety Steering Group in its new workshop format. We have refreshed the format of the Board and adapted the Youth Safety Outcomes Framework to align with the 'Good Life Camden' framework, which was co-produced with residents in Camden.
- The workshop allowed us to spend time reflecting on the new Outcomes Framework and hear learning from a Serious Case Review. Peer advocates from our Youth Services attended the session and were able to provide their feedback.
- The next workshop will take place in December, during Youth Celebration Week.

4. Children, Young People's and Families voice

Camden has recently elected a **new Youth MP - Zarin Bakhshzaad**, age 17 who will have a two-year term as the voice for Camden's young people. The Youth MP leads the Camden Youth Council, attends regional and national events and meets with Senior Council officers, Councillors and other local decision makers. The Youth MP is also a member of the Youth Safety Steering Group.

5. Key successes

'Honest Grind Coffee', an employment programme to help young people gain valuable work experience in coffee making, won the AYM (Association of Youth Justice Managers) [John Hawkins award](#). **Honest Grind have now opened a café at the Old Diorama Arts Centre**, which provides young people the opportunity to learn about barista training. We have implemented a mechanism to pay our young people in money, rather than vouchers.