

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Youth Justice Plan 2023-2025 Midpoint Review	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture Cabinet Member for Safer Communities Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee	DATE 8 October 2024
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>The report summarises the priorities of the 2023-2025 plan and updates performance at its midpoint for the Youth Justice Service. It provides an overview of progress from the previous plan, references national and regional priorities and how we seek to deliver on our priorities.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <p>Charlotte Matthews, Camden Youth Justice Service Crowndale Centre, 2nd floor, 218 Eversholt street, London, NW1 1BD 0207 9743461 / charlotte.matthews1@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>The Committee is asked to note the report.</p>	

Signed: 

Tim Aldridge, Executive Director, Children and Learning

Date: 26 September 2024

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Youth Justice Services were created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 with the purpose of preventing offending by children. Camden's Youth Justice Services (YJS) works with its key partners - police, children's services, health services, probation, community safety and voluntary and private sector providers. The Youth Justice Board oversees all youth justice services and requires the YJS to look at and address children from groups who are over-represented, prevention, diversion, education, restorative approaches and victims, detention in police custody, remands and constructive resettlement. Camden have been assessed by the Youth Justice Board oversight framework as strong performance. This is the highest ranking. Camden are in the top quartile nationally of relevant oversight metrics, have strong plan and standards, financial compliance and a good or outstanding inspection outcomes. As a result of this, Camden are encouraged to share our work with peers and partners.
- 1.2. Each year the Local Youth Justice Board is required to complete a Youth Justice Plan demonstrating its achievements over the past year and its priorities for the coming year as a condition of its grant. It supports We Make Camden ambitions by ensuring that Camden actively tackles injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong and open communities where everyone can contribute, is aligned with the Community Wealth Fund objectives and supports the Youth Mission where every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure by 2025.

2. YJS plan key elements

- 2.1. The Plan gives an overview of the work of the Youth Justice Service in Camden and sets out details of performance over the past year and priorities for the coming year. The Youth Justice Plan covers the 2023-25 period and was reviewed in June 2024
- 2.2. In Camden we continue to aspire to make Camden 'a better Borough, where no-one is left behind'. The YJS does this by working together with its key partners – the Police, Children's Services, Health Services, Probation, Community Safety and both voluntary and private sector providers - to deliver high quality and effective services to children, their families and the victims of offending.
- 2.3. The overall effectiveness of the YJS is monitored by the YJB against three key National Indicators which are linked directly to the Service's core aims.
 - Reducing first time entrants
 - Reducing re-offending
 - Reducing the use of custody
- 2.4. The 2023/24 performance data combined with both local and national drivers have reinforced following service priorities for 2023/25:
 1. Continue to perform well against National and Local Indicators of performance
 2. Maintain and continue the work on tackling Disproportionality
 3. Maintain and encourage better use of Education Training Employment opportunities/interventions
 4. Continue to invest in the staff teams' development and wellbeing
 5. Evaluate and evidence Camden interventions and approaches
 6. Continue to use feedback from children and families to improve the service
 7. Strengthen the Prevention Approach provided within the YJS
 8. Responding to social inequality.

3. Performance Summary

- 3.1. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, 113 offences led to 49 children receiving criminal justice outcomes. This averages 2.3 per child. 23 children received more than one criminal justice outcome. This is very similar to last year's figures where 103 offences led to 41 children receiving criminal justice outcomes. Of the 113 offences, 43 (38%) were for Violence against the Person. Theft and Handling and Drugs accounts for 17 (15%) and 16 offences (14%) respectively. 4 children received 5 or more outcomes which aligns with the re-offending data that shows a small but persistent group of children are responsible for the majority of the offending.
- 3.2. Violence against the Person offences have increased from 2022/23 levels where in 2023/24 27 offences (26%) were committed; however, it remains lower than pre-pandemic levels (6 children committed more than 1 offence in this category, with one committing 8 violent offences). The majority (95%) of these offences had a gravity rating of 3 which is relatively low level (gravity matrix is 1-7).
- 3.3. Most of the children in the cohort are 15- and 16-year-olds and make up 62% of the group. 2 of the group are girls, (4%) and 47 are boys (96%). This is a slight shift from previous cohorts who have predominantly been 16-17 year of age.
- 3.4. 7 of the 49 children have been a Child Looked After; this represents 14% of the YJS cohort, and an overrepresentation. 1 child had been looked after solely because of their remand status.
- 3.5. First time Entrants increased in 2023/24 from 25 (in 2022/23) to 34. Whilst an increase, this still remains very low and lower than pre-pandemic levels. The use of remand also increased slightly from 3 episodes to 5 in 2023/24. Again, these are very low numbers, the implementation of the remand thematic recommendations will continue to ensure no children are unnecessarily remanded.

4. Reducing Re-offending

Camden's current cohort (October 2021 - September 2022) consists of 52 children who were tracked for twelve months. Measuring reoffending rates of a cohort is always retrospective as it must allow 12 months for all children on the cohort to desist or reoffend. Hence this is the most recent local data available.

5. Number of offenders:

The period October 2021 - September 2022 shows 21.2%, 11 of the 52 children re-offended within the time period, in comparison to 17.6%, 15 of 85 children in the previous year. This is a decrease in performance on the previous year. It is important to note that the previous year was during the pandemic and activity local was suppressed due to restrictions.

6. Re-offences per reoffender:

- 6.1. Re-offences per reoffender has increased from 3.53 to 5.27. In real terms that's 11 re-offenders who committed 58 reoffences, compared with 15 re-offenders who committed 53 reoffences, in the previous cohort. So less children are re-offending, committing slightly more re-offences when compared with the previous cohort.

- 6.2. In summary, this data shows that there has been an overall downward trend in the number of children in the cohort and remains below levels in 2016/17. The main changes for this cohort is the very low number of children reoffending, highlighting again, the small but persistent group of children responsible for the majority of the re-offending, 5 of the children committed 45 (77.5%) of further offences. In terms of reoccurring themes to help proactively identify which children may become prolific is complex. The groups each year are small and have bespoke needs. However what we do know is long periods of absence from school, additional learning needs, long periods of social care involvement for neglect and abuse, parental mental health and substance misuse are all commonplace. This correlates closely with our priorities focusing on Education Training and Employment innovation, responding to social inequality and staff development/wellbeing. It is paramount for all our children that they have a consistent relationship built on trust over time so they can begin to open up about what may help move away from offending.
- 6.3. Census data for Camden (2021) shows a decrease in the Black and Mixed population but an increase in the Other groups. Analysis of the YJS cohort shows that Black, Mixed and other children are overrepresented in the Youth Justice Service.
- 6.4. Black and Mixed heritage children remain disproportionately represented in the YJS cohort with Asian children being underrepresented. Big changes in the last cohort is the marked reduction in White children in the cohort and considerable increase in the Other group, comprising 19% of the cohort. This group has increased considerably in the last 3 years. Previously the Other group was not above 3% and has risen since 2020/21.
- 6.5. Priorities were set for the 2023-25 plan based on performance data combined with both local and national drivers. These were reviewed at the midpoint of the plan and were slightly reviewed following feedback from partners, staff, children and parents through the Stakeholder Engagement Event on 16th May.

7. Priority 1 Update: Continue to perform well against National and Local Indicators of performance

- 7.1. The YJS has sustained a low level of first time entrants (children who are receiving criminal outcomes for the first time) although this is now starting to rise to pre-pandemic levels. We continue to have low use of remand and no children have received custodial sentences for the past 2 years.
- 7.2. The focus here over the next 12 months is to continue to monitor and review the offending themes, ensuring we have good resources to respond. We plan to explore the children who do not reoffend but have prevalent vulnerability factors. We will Continue to work with partners on outcomes from learning reviews and ensure action plans are implemented. We are also working towards implementing the remand thematic report recommendations to reduce unnecessary use of remand.

8. Priority 2 Update: Maintain and continue the work on tackling Disproportionality

- 8.1. The YJS has updated local disparity data, with a focus on education which was shared with the YJS Management Board and was also presented to Presented disproportionality data to Heads of Service and Service Managers. Data from 2022/23 shows an increase in the proportion of Black children receiving out of court disposals and a reduction in over assessing risk of serious harm for Black and Mixed Heritage children. This is important because it demonstrates less bias in our assessments with

children having the appropriate intensity offer of support that is informed by the evidence. We rolled out Adultification training to YJS and IYSS services and have a working group established. The Deferred Exclusion Programme (for children at risk of exclusion) is now being offered to all schools in Camden with the aim to keep children in school. To date, only 3 schools have referred in and benefitted from the offer. Further promotion of this offer across schools will be taking place in Autumn. We have improved communication with education and inclusion leads to develop work around managed moves. We continue to work with other London boroughs to learn and share practice. We had 5 children successfully engaged with the MOPAC mentoring scheme and we continue to invest in the Ether programme for our global majority boys. The Ether programme is delivered by Wipers Organisation. The 8 week programme is designed for Global Majority boys to explore self-esteem, identity, discrimination and leadership. This strengths-based programme has been consistently positively received by our children that attend and has a good evidence base and feedback on the positive impact attendance has.

- 8.2. The focus over the next 12 months will be to develop a disproportionality working group to better understand the picture and if there are system wide issues that require a collective response. We hope to widen use/up take of the Deferred exclusion programme across all secondary schools. We will develop work with police colleagues and community monitoring group on use of stop and search, training police recruits, and building bridges between children and police. We will continue to monitor and analyse disproportionality data on an annual basis and monitor the uptake of children looked after accessing paid work experience placements. Feedback from the new social grace's engagement tool will be collated for learning.

9. Priority 3 Update: Maintain and encourage better use of ETE opportunities/interventions

- 9.1. The YJS paid work experience placements continue and has expanded, and we now have 10 placements. We are extremely proud that 2 children have been offered full time employment as a result of successful paid work experience. 2 children have successfully completed the Deferred Exclusion Programme. The Honest Grind Coffee initiative continues with some children working for money. 7 of the Reparation Projects enable children to receive an Assessment Qualification Alliance (AQA) and 11 AQAs were presented to 10 children during 2023/24. We also have a dedicated Advanced Practitioner allocated to be the direct link with H3 Federation to improve partnership working. H3 is the federation of 3 schools, Haverstock, Harmond and Heath. Collectively they are overseen by the Executive Headteacher who sits on the YJS Board. A recent partnership working agreement between IYSS and H3 has outlined expectations on how our services will work together, share information timely and offer support to children attending these schools at the earliest opportunity.
- 9.2. The focus over the next 12 months will be on monitoring and evaluating the new paid work experience placements, impact, progression, and children's feedback. We have just launched a medium term paid work experience placements and this will be monitored and evaluated. We will continue to obtain feedback from children and employers as to what works well, and what is needed to make placements successful. We will finalise and review impact of H3 partnership working arrangements. We will work to ensure that all placements have AQA's or other qualifications attached to them. We will continue to work towards all work experience placements are paid in money, not vouchers; and understand key issues for children who do not want to engage with this and explore further what the barriers are and how we can overcome them.

10. Priority 4 Update: Continue to invest in the staff teams' development and wellbeing

- 10.1. Established during lockdown, monthly workshops for all staff continue to take place. Practice Forum for front line staff continues, which is a *manager-free* zone to discuss all practice issues.
- 10.2. We have a *Say Anything* online anonymous 'box' for staff to feedback/make suggestions on anything relating to the Youth Justice Service which continues to be used and acted on by management. Staff are able to work flexibly whilst maintaining the service needs, to ensure a better work-life balance and staff can access health and wellbeing support through Camden's corporate offer. A new staff survey found that 100% of staff agreed Camden YJS is a good place to work (58% of staff *Strongly Agree* and 42% *Agree*). The management team regularly utilise Camden's Reward and Recognition scheme and have recently created the employee of the month to show staff appreciation. A training analysis over the past 3 years to determine future events is being carried out alongside the Learning & Development team.
- 10.3. During the next 12 months, the Youth Justice Apprenticeship will be trialled within the team to support professional development. We will consult with staff on the training and development offer after analysis of current needs and strengths across Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS). We hope to undertake a pay review for frontline staff and will complete an annual staff survey for analysis and review.

11. Priority 5 Update: Evaluate and evidence Camden interventions and approaches

- 11.1. End of order feedback from children shows consistently positive impact is made by the YJS. Feedback from Reparation projects on what works, what could be done better, impact of skills gained is reviewed regularly. Feedback from court appearances demonstrate improved understanding and communication approaches are strong from the staff team. Reparation is when children 'make things right' for the victim or the community by giving something back. Every child takes part in reparation and the number of hours you must complete will depend on the order length and how serious the offence was. In Camden we have a variety of reparation projects from carpentry, mosaics, bike repairs, boxing, community kitchen. Spontaneous positive feedback from parents highlight the impact our relational approaches have with their children.
- 11.2. The focus for the coming year will be to continue the training and development needs analysis across IYSS and investment in the core approaches we use. The annual analysis of end of order feedback from children will take place at the end of the financial year and we will evolve the feedback themes from children, led by peer advocates. We continue to learn from other YJS', evidence bases and what works in youth justice.

12. Priority 6: Continue to use feedback from children and families to improve the service

- 12.1. Last year we completed feedback surveys on court, Education, Training and Employment, Referral Orders, reparation, disproportionality, exploitation, specialist workers, and the experiences of girls. End of order surveys are completed with encouraging results and analysed annually. Our Peer Advocates (paid staff members who are previous service users) offer a voice for children. We established a Children Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs) survey and created a working group to

explore barriers for children around mental health and accessing support. Parenting workshops have taken place and we have acted on feedback, making changes and being transparent (*You said - We did*).

- 12.2. We are going to work with strategy colleagues on effective ways of analysing qualitative data. We will ensure Peer Advocates attend all board meetings on a rota in future and take an active role, where they feel comfortable. We will expand and review the '*you said, we did*' project and work with children so they know how they can access this. We are going to pilot a new app to support participation from children with services. We will apply learning from Peer Advocate work in other service areas to consider how this can inform our approaches.
- 12.3. The end of order survey completed by children is extremely positive and the feedback given shows the impacts being made:
- *I would say she was smart and went the extra mile which was good*
 - *She was kind, fun to attend, support me during education*
 - *I can just talk to her, easy to talk to*
 - *She was there when I needed someone the most*
 - *She helped me by arranging activities. YJS has also supported me going into further education*
 - *X was chill I liked working with her*
 - *All of it, the way she worked with me was just really good.*
 - *Before, I couldn't be bothered...I was getting into fights and that. It was literally for nothing. I'm not like that now"* quote from child attending Honest Grind Coffee
 - *I'm here because of the productive environment* - child attending paid work experience placement

13. Priority 7: Strengthen the Prevention Approach provided within the YJS

- 13.1. This year we have increased engagement with our Turnaround programme. Turnaround in Camden is a voluntary Early Help programme delivered by the Youth Justice Service and is funded by the Ministry of Justice for three years 2022 - 2025, aiming to intervene earlier and improve outcomes for children on the cusp of entering the Youth Justice System. Children are offered a minimum of 8 sessions over a 12-week period and aims to prepare children for the future and help them go onto to achieve; it also aims to help children to learn from the mistakes they have made and to be able to move on from less positive experiences. In 2024/5, 30 children completed their intervention and we plan to continue offering a similar voluntary support programme to children once the funding for this ends in March 2025. We successfully organised an IYSS-wide residential planned for 12 children in June 2024. We have reduced out of court disposals year on year.
- 13.2. The focus for the rest of the period is to continue to deliver the Turnaround intervention and begin plans to establish the criteria for the voluntary offer that will replace it post March. Part of this includes monitoring and evaluating the current voluntary offer within YJS and across IYSS to consider what is sustainable post 2025.

14. Priority 8: Responding to social inequality

- 14.1. Small but significant changes are being made in this area. All children are offered snacks and drinks during their YJS appointments, and the new reception space has facilitated this. We also have a Mini Food Share in the space. The Service has invested

in a range of vouchers to support families in practical ways, to buy food, household items and essential equipment, e.g. heaters, blankets and furniture. Other ways intended to support financially, such as home improvements have been beneficial. We have also enabled families to have day trips/engage with activities to nurture positive relationships and family experiences. We continue to signpost and promote a range of support available in Camden and again the new reception space has allowed us to display relevant information to children and their parents/carers.

- 14.2. This year we will focus on the promotion of the food share with parents of YJS children and hope more families will benefit from this. We will strengthen our links with the Feed Camden and wider networks of support for families. We will also ask children what food they want access to. Finally, we will evaluate the impact of children who have received financial support to determine if it has made a difference

15. Challenges, risks and issues

- 15.1. Reduction in CAMHS support – Internal restructuring and sub regional changes within North Central London CAMHS has led to considerable strain for our CAMHS colleagues. The wider commissioning arrangements between the Tavistock and Camden Local Authority has meant that small but incremental changes with the service has led to having a reduction in CAMHS support within the YJS. We have effectively lost one day per week of clinical psychologist input for our children. We are monitoring this closely.
- 15.2. It has not been possible to recruit a Probation Officer (PO) and this part-time post has been vacant since September 2023. 2 of our new recruited staff are qualified probation officers, one had previously been our seconded PO, so we have an interim measure to support transitioning children whilst we continue to recruit to the permanent post. Our chair of the board will be raising the absence of the post with NPS colleagues to review.
- 15.3. In the last year the YJS has seen an increasing number of housing difficulties faced by families. The overall reduction in housing stock within the borough has led to a number of families fleeing violence from offending peer groups move into temporary accommodation such as hotels, often moving week to week. The scale of disruption caused for these families in terms of accessing help, education, work, extended family cannot be underestimated. The regional and wider housing shortages mean it is very challenging for families to know when or if they will be able to get more suitable housing, or where this could be. Meetings have been taking place across Housing, Community Safety and Children's services to consider how these challenges can be responded to in future that can better meet the needs of our families. A local protocol is in the process of being agreed to specifically look at the response for housing support for children at risk of serious youth violence.
- 15.4. Future funding of honest grind coffee initiative post 2025: a critical challenge for the initiative moving forward will be confirming funding for the role of project manager. Options to secure funding from alternative sources may mean widening the scope of children who can be referred, such as children from other boroughs or from other key priority groups within Youth Mission to ensure it can continue to run.
- 15.5. Staff retention on less pay than neighbouring boroughs – hopefully a pay review of staff will help us to offer a more competitive salary.

16. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from this report.
The challenges noted have potential financial implications, such as the suggestion of a pay review, which would need to be managed within the Council's existing resources.

17. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

There are no legal comments for this report.

18. Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications for this Plan.

REPORT ENDS