

HMI PROBATION INSPECTION OUTCOME
STOCKTON ON TEES YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

Introduction:

HMI Probation (HMIP) published its Short Quality Screening report of youth offending work in Stockton on Tees on 18 December 2013. The report is attached at Appendix A and is available to view online at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-probation/inspection-reports-youth/inspection-of-youth-offending-work>. Also attached are the scores of the YOS at Appendix B.

Information:

The YOS was inspected as part of the Short Quality Screening (SQS) inspection programme over 3 days from 25-27 November 2013. The focus of inspection was case work with young people and their families, and how well the YOS assesses, manages and delivers work across 4 key themes:

- Reducing the likelihood of reoffending
- Protecting the public
- Protecting the child or young person
- Ensuring that sentence is served

During the inspection, case files were examined and YOS Officers were interviewed. The focus of inspection was on community and custodial court orders imposed from March – September 2013.

The YOS has received very good feedback on its performance. The summary of the report states:

“Overall, we found a really positive picture in Stockton-on-Tees. The YOS can be proud of the progress made since our last inspection in 2010. Staff delivered high quality reports and assessments of reoffending, harm and vulnerability. They were well supported by their management team through robust quality assurance procedures. There is scope for further improvement by ensuring that reviews are timely and completed in response to significant changes in the circumstances of children and young people”

This is an excellent outcome for the partnership in Stockton on Tees.

Key Strengths identified by inspectors:

- Excellent engagement with children and young people and their parents / carers in carrying out initial assessments and intervention plans
- The identification of diversity issues and what needed to be done to overcome barriers to change
- High quality assessments of the likelihood of reoffending, risk of harm and vulnerability both at report and initial assessment stage

There was one recommendation for improvement:

- In all cases, reviews of assessments and plans to tackle the risk of harm to others and vulnerability should be timely and completed quickly in the event of a significant change in circumstances

By the time of inspection, the YOS had already implemented activity to achieve more timely review of cases, as this was an area we already knew that we needed to improve on.

Our scoring in this area (85% and 80% respectively, as outlined in Appendix B) evidences that our improvement activity is already having an impact, as measured against the findings of our own case file audits earlier in 2013. Therefore, given the relatively high level of performance in this area, I propose that the Board allows for the existing improvement activity to become embedded within the service.

This specific area will be monitored by managers for the next 3 months during the regular case file audit process and through staff supervision and I report on results at the next Management Board meeting.

Scores:

Detailed scoring for the YOS is attached at Appendix B.

The chart shows an **overall average score of 91%** for Stockton on Tees, with scores ranging from 80% to 100%, broken down into the following themes:

- Reducing the likelihood of Reoffending – average of 91%
- Protecting the Public – 91%
- Protecting the Child or Young Person – 87%
- Ensuring that Sentence is Served – 96%

These are very high scores and compare very favourably to other SQS reports.

In December 2013, HMIP produced new guidance about scoring descriptors for the Full Joint Inspection.

Case assessment scores	Descriptor	Stars
80% +	Good	★★★★
65-79%	Satisfactory	★★★☆
50-64%	Unsatisfactory	★★☆☆
< 50%	Poor	★☆☆☆

Whilst not directly applied to the SQS inspection framework, it helps provide an understanding of the expected range of scores and benchmark local performance.

Recommendations:

1. That the Board notes the excellent feedback from HMIP about the performance of Stockton YOS

2. That the Board notes that the YOS has already put processes in place to achieve the recommended area for improvement. By way of assurance, I propose that the Board receives a further update report about this specific area of work in the Case File Audit Summary report at the next meeting.

Miriam Sigsworth
YOS Manager
9th January 2014