

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING  
CABINET MEMBER**

**HER MAJESTIES INSPECTORS OF PROBATION SHORT INSPECTION OF YOUTH  
OFFENDING WORK IN NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet Member of the outcome of the Her Majesties Inspectors of Probation Short Inspection of North Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service 12 – 14 September 2016.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 As part of the youth offending inspection regime, inspectors from Her Majesties Inspectors of Probation undertake a series of Short Quality Screening (SQS) inspections nationally. These inspections focus on the quality and effectiveness of Youth Offending Service (YOS) case work. To do this, the inspectors audit each of the cases they select against specific criteria, including reviewing records, speaking to the young person's case manager at the YOS, cross-referencing with procedures, policies and protocols and considering the effectiveness of a multi-agency, partnership approach in the cases inspected.
- 2.2 The focus of the SQS is the inspection of the quality of work at the start of the sentence with children and young people who have offended, primarily through to the point when initial plans should be in place post-sentence.
- 2.3 The inspection of the North Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service was conducted from 12 September to 14 September 2016 as part of the on-gong programme of inspections of youth offending work. It examined 14 cases of children and young people who had recently offended and were supervised by North Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service.

**3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The Inspectors spent 2½ days within the YOS, commencing at 1.00pm on Monday 12 September and leaving at 5.00pm on Wednesday 14 September. There were two inspectors on site. They reviewed the YOS procedures and documentation, audited the cases, then meet with the Case Managers responsible for the 14 cases selected in order to form their judgments on each case against the areas below.
- 3.2 The Inspection focuses on four key areas:
- Reducing reoffending, including:
- Assessment provides a robust framework for work to reduce reoffending

- Planning increases the likelihood of the required work being undertaken to reduce reoffending
- Management and partnership work make a positive difference to reducing reoffending.

Protecting the public, including:

- Assessment provides a robust framework for work to manage risk of harm to others
- Planning maximises the likelihood of victims being protected
- Required work is undertaken to manage risk of harm to others and this is of good quality
- Effective management ensures the public is protected

Protecting the child or young person, including:

- Assessment provides a robust framework for work to protect children and young people and reduce their vulnerability
- Planning maximises the likelihood of children and young people being protected and their vulnerability reduced
- Effective management ensures that children and young people are protected and their vulnerability is reduced

Ensuring that the sentence is served, including:

- The likelihood of successful outcomes from the sentence is increased by good quality engagement with the child or young person and their family
- Children and young people serve the sentence that they have received
- The likelihood of a successful outcome from the sentence is increased through attention to the health, well-being, education, training, employment and other needs of the child or young person
- Effective management ensures that the objectives of the Youth Justice System are met

3.3 The inspectors provided verbal feedback during the afternoon of Friday 16 September by telephone which was very positive in relation to the work of the YOS and the progress made since the last inspection.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The inspection report has now been published and was very positive regarding the work of the YOS and its partners. The key findings of the inspection were:

“Overall, we found that the welfare and safety of children and young people was the core principle underpinning practice at North Lincolnshire YOT. Case managers were motivated, committed and enthusiastic. Detailed assessments, including learning styles, speech and language screening and health screening, were carried out on all cases. Staff worked hard to support children and young people to respond to crisis and instability in their lives. Managers worked closely with staff to make decisions and quality assure their work. A variety of local resources and agencies were available to case managers who could refer in to mental health services, substance misuse provision, education and much more. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) were robust and effective”.

4.2 Key strengths the inspectors identified were:

- Case managers were skilled, experienced and highly dedicated to welfare and safeguarding.
- Initial assessments and PSRs were constructed effectively containing detailed information.

- The YOT had a good focus on victim safety and the use of restorative justice.
- Partnership arrangements with social care were strong leading to good safeguarding measures.
- Case managers worked effectively with custodial and partner agencies.
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements were robust, providing effective direction.
- Educational pathways were positively promoted, particularly the summer arts college.
- Children and young people were supported by a range of agencies, whose co-location with case managers was seen as a significant benefit.
- Compliance panels were effectively improving engagement following deterioration.
- Managers were actively involved, providing regular management oversight and staff support.

4.3 Inspectors felt that there could be more detail in intervention plans, to ensure work directly focussing on offending behaviour is clear, timely and completed.

4.4 In line with this, the inspectors made three recommendations to further improve practice, these were:

- Intervention plans should contain specific reference to what work will be carried out and reviewed to update new circumstances.
- Managers should use quality assurance methods to ensure all information gathered from other agencies is recorded and assessed within vulnerability plans.
- Managers should make sure offence focused work is being delivered, in line with learning styles identified and recorded in case records.

To ensure that these areas are addressed, the YOS has implemented an action plan to address these.

## 5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 The Youth Offending Service continues to perform well, this includes that re-offending by the young people involved with the YOS has reduced and is now lower than England and Humberside comparators. The latest published comparisons from the Youth Justice Board indicate that the North Lincolnshire percentage of reoffenders was 33% - compared to the National average of 38% and Humberside average of 39%.

5.2 The resources of the YOS continue to target the prevention of offending, reduction of First Time entrants to the youth justice system and reducing reoffending.

## 6. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 N/A

## 7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

7.1 N/A

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member receives the report and positive outcome of the HMIP SQS inspection of the Youth Offending Service and supports the continued work to improve in the areas outlined by the inspectors.

### INTERIM DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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Date: 25/10/2016

#### **Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

HMIP Short Quality Screening of Youth Offending Services in North Lincolnshire

<i>To:</i>	David Hall, Chair of North Lincolnshire Youth Offending Team Management Board
<i>Copy to:</i>	See copy list at end
<i>From:</i>	Alan MacDonald, Assistant Chief Inspector (Youth Justice)
<i>Publication date:</i>	05 October 2016

## Report of Short Quality Screening (SQS) of youth offending work in North Lincolnshire

The inspection was conducted from 12-14 September 2016 as part of our programme of inspection of youth offending work. This report is published on the HMI Probation website. A copy will be provided to partner inspectorates to inform their inspections, and to the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

### Context

The aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children and young people. Good quality assessment and planning at the start of a sentence is critical to increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes. We examined 14 cases of children and young people who had recently offended and were supervised by North Lincolnshire Youth Offending Team (YOT). Wherever possible, this was undertaken in conjunction with the allocated case manager, thereby offering a learning opportunity for staff. The published reoffending rate<sup>1</sup> for North Lincolnshire was 32.6% compared to 37.8% for all England and Wales.

### Summary

Overall, we found that the welfare and safety of children and young people was the core principle underpinning practice at North Lincolnshire YOT. Case managers were motivated, committed and enthusiastic. Detailed assessments, including learning styles, speech and language screenings and health screenings, were carried out on all cases. Staff worked hard to support children and young people to respond to crisis and instability in their lives. Managers worked closely with staff to make decisions and quality assure their work. A variety of local resources and agencies were available to case managers who could refer cases to mental health services, substance misuse provision, education and much more. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were robust and effective. There was insufficient detail in intervention plans to outline the work being carried out to address reoffending. While the YOT had substantially lowered its reoffending rates, work directly focusing on offending behaviour was often delayed or not completed. Managers were actively involved in a range of internal forums; these could be reviewed and strengthened to enhance internal leadership.

<sup>1</sup> The reoffending rate that was available during the fieldwork was published July 2016, and was based on binary reoffending rates after 12 months for the October 2013 to September 2014 cohort. Source: Ministry of Justice.

## Commentary on the inspection in North Lincolnshire:

### 1. Reducing reoffending

- 1.1. We found case managers had good insight into the children and young people they were working with, which was transferred into initial assessments. Pre-sentence reports detailed the current circumstances of the children and young people, and provided sufficient information relating to offences and factors linked to the likelihood of reoffending. Case managers were clear why children and young people had offended.
- 1.2. Case managers reviewed assessments when changes had occurred in the cases we inspected. We saw a number of cases where the structure of reviews was clear and succinct. One inspector found: *"Regular contact while in custody allowed the case manager to update the assessment. Following referral to MAPPA and changes in custody, the case manager updated assessments, which were concise, detailed and informative"*.
- 1.3. We found objectives were not always linked to the likelihood of reoffending in the cases inspected. The intervention plans were not sufficiently clear on what specifically the children and young people needed to do to reduce their likelihood of reoffending. We found that the work planned was not offence-related. Case managers knew what contributed towards offending in the cases inspected, but that was not translated in to the intervention plans.
- 1.4. Reviews of initial intervention plans were not completed in all cases. Initial objectives remained unchanged despite changes evident in case records, although we did see progress being made with their individual needs. Progress made by children and young people against the objectives was not measured and recorded. Case managers were making use of services available to assist children and young people with general lifestyle needs and less use of resources that were available for offending behaviour interventions. As a result, we did not see sufficient examples of offence-focused work being carried out.
- 1.5. The use of custodial sentencing reduced during the last two years; from a rate markedly above the national average to one which is very slightly above the figure of 0.37 (0.40 for North Lincolnshire) per 1,000 of the 10 to 17 year old population. This reflects the growing credibility of North Lincolnshire YOT in presenting good quality pre-sentence reports and plans to sentencing courts.

### 2. Protecting the public

- 2.1. Sufficient effort was made to understand and explain the risk of harm to others posed by children and young people. Case managers were experienced in analysing offending behaviour and assessing the impact on actual and potential victims. In one case we inspected we found that the risk of harm was assessed too high. The assessment of risk of harm was validated by managers through a countersigning process and through attending a multi-agency risk, safety and well-being meeting. In eight cases, the multi-agency risk meeting added no additional value to the initial assessment.
- 2.2. Risk management plans were comprehensive. We saw sufficient focus on victim safety and involvement of the victim liaison officer. The YOT was making efforts to arrange restorative justice conferences and was working with the police to protect repeat victims.
- 2.3. Timely reviews of risk management plans were being completed. We were pleased to see new information from other agencies being used by case managers when conducting reviews and updating plans to manage the risk of harm. Case managers did what they needed to manage risk of harm in custody. They involved custodial staff in the planning to manage the risk of harm, but interventions were not always completed due to the

secure establishment not being able to undertake them. This resulted in the child or young person remaining in custody with no offending behaviour work planned until after release.

- 2.4. MAPPA are designed to protect the public, requiring local criminal justice agencies and other bodies to work in partnership in dealing with children and young people who offend. In North Lincolnshire we found referrals to MAPPA were timely and effective. We saw that where MAPPA was involved, the management of the case was significantly enhanced. Clear direction was provided and actions were completed by those responsible; this helped to maximise public protection. Case managers found involvement from MAPPA was supportive and enhanced their work.

### **3. Protecting the child or young person**

- 3.1. The YOT were effectively assessing and managing the safety and well-being of children and young people. In 13 cases we found a sufficient assessment and explanation of factors impacting on vulnerability. In one case where the YOT had recorded concerns in relation to child sexual exploitation, the information they had access to was not fully detailed and explained within the safety and well-being assessment.
- 3.2. North Lincolnshire YOT was fortunate to be co-located with a range of other agencies. This arrangement provided efficient and prompt access to services. We saw case managers going beyond expected standards to make sure children and young people and their families were safe by accessing relevant services. The relationship with children's social care services was good, leading to swift information sharing and a collaborative approach to working with children and young people and their families.
- 3.3. In all cases inspected, we found sufficient planning to address safeguarding and vulnerability. Vulnerability management plans were focused on both community and custodial periods. We saw an example where vulnerability management was high on the agenda for a case manager who monitored the well-being of a young person in custody through weekly visits being carried out. We found this case manager went the extra mile, maintaining contact with the young person while in the segregation unit.
- 3.4. Managers were responsive to the vulnerability needs of children and young people. We saw examples of cases being escalated to senior management to make sure appropriate accommodation was secured for a vulnerable child or young person. Managers were working in partnership with other agencies to make sure partners were carrying out their responsibilities to protect children and young people.

### **4. Making sure the sentence is served**

- 4.1. The YOT carried out thorough initial assessments of all children and young people in the cases we saw. All cases had assessments of learning styles, medical screenings, speech and language screenings, self-assessments and barriers to engagement. We found, in some cases, the assessment of learning styles was not being applied during one-to-one contact with children and young people.
- 4.2. The YOT delivered a three week summer arts college with the aim of engaging children and young people in education, training and employment. We found that out of the seven who took part, all gained qualifications accredited by Unitas, a national charity. The YOT had access to an educational psychologist and a speech and language worker. Local induction material was reviewed in accordance with speech and language needs to devise child-friendly documentation.

- 4.3. Overall, children and young people were engaging with the sentence. Where compliance was deteriorating, case managers took sufficient action to return cases to court. Compliance panels were held, which in some cases improved future engagement and attendance. Children and young people were being supported to address their lifestyle difficulties, however, not enough offence-focused work was being carried out during the sentence to produce outcomes to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

### **Operational management**

The management team were respected by case managers, who valued their support. We were impressed to see that managers had been actively involved in all the cases that we inspected, something that case managers clearly found reassuring. Staff supervision made a positive contribution to case management, the quality of work to protect others from risk of harm, and work to address safeguarding and vulnerability. Case assessments were checked through quality assurance and gate keeping processes. Additionally, managers chaired a number of internal forums where all cases were discussed. These processes clearly added value in many cases, but in some cases duplicated the work while providing no additional direction on the management of the case. The approach was resource intensive and impacted on the time available to managers to provide effective leadership. Managers were supportive of staff development, providing access to training and regular formal and informal staff supervision.

### **Key strengths**

- Case managers were skilled, experienced and highly dedicated to welfare and safeguarding.
- Initial assessments and pre-sentence reports were constructed effectively, containing detailed information.
- The YOT had a good focus on victim safety and the use of restorative justice.
- Partnership arrangements with children's social care services were strong, leading to good safeguarding measures.
- Case managers worked effectively with custodial and partner agencies.
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements were robust, providing effective direction.
- Educational pathways were positively promoted, particularly the summer arts college.
- Children and young people were supported by a range of agencies, whose co-location with case managers was seen as a significant benefit.
- Compliance panels were effectively improving engagement following deterioration.
- Managers were actively involved, providing regular management oversight and staff support.

### **Areas requiring improvement**

- Intervention plans should contain specific reference to what work will be carried out, and reviewed to update new circumstances.
- Managers should use quality assurance methods to make sure all information gathered from other agencies is recorded and assessed within vulnerability management plans.
- Managers should make sure offence-focused work is being delivered, in line with learning styles identified and recorded in case records.

We are grateful for the support that we received from staff in the YOT to facilitate and engage with this inspection. Please pass on our thanks, and make sure that they are made fully aware of these inspection findings.



If you have any further questions about the inspection please contact the lead inspector, who was Simi Badachha. She can be contacted at [simi.badachha@hmiprobation.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:simi.badachha@hmiprobation.gsi.gov.uk) or on 07979 690596.

Copy to:

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Director of Children's Services	<i>Denise Hyde</i>
Lead Elected Member for Children's Services	<i>David Rose</i>
Lead Elected Member for Crime	<i>Richard Hannigan</i>
Elected Mayor	<i>Cllr Trevor Foster</i>
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire	<i>Marc Jones</i>
Chair of Local Safeguarding Children Board	<i>Edwina Harrison</i>
Chair of Youth Court Bench	<i>Carl Thomas</i>
YJB Business Area Manager	<i>Gary Oscroft</i>
Ofsted – Further Education and Skills	<i>Paul Joyce, Stephen Miller</i>
Ofsted – Social Care	<i>Mary Candlin, Carolyn Adcock</i>
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Note 1: As an independent inspectorate, HMI Probation provides assurance to Ministers and the public on the effectiveness of work with those who have offended or are likely to offend, promotes continuous improvement by the organisations that we inspect and contributes to the effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Note 2: We gather evidence against the SQS criteria, which are available on the HMI Probation website - <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation>.

Note 3: To request a paper copy of this report, please contact HMI Probation Communications at [communications@hmiprobation.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:communications@hmiprobation.gsi.gov.uk) or on 0161 240 5336.