

<b>Committee:</b> Safeguarding Sub-Committee – For Information	<b>Dated:</b> 10/10/2022
<b>Subject: Youth Offending Service Inspection Report and Action Plan</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<i>Contribute to a flourishing society sections 1-4</i>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Kelly Duggan , Tower Hamlets YOS Rachel Talmage, Head of Children Social Care and Early Help	

### Summary

The City of London commissions Tower Hamlets to operate our Youth Offending Service (YOS). It is a statutory requirement, given the local authority function of the City of London, to provide a service to any children who use offending behaviour who are resident within its boundaries. In April 2022, an inspection of the commissioned service was undertaken by Her Majesty’s Inspector of Probation (HMIP). This report introduces the inspection findings and the subsequent improvement plan by the YOS.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The City of London commissions Tower Hamlets to operate our YOS. It is a statutory requirement to provide a service to any children who use offending behaviour who are resident in the City of London. The service is outsourced due to our small resident population and the consequent small size of Children’s Services.
2. The service has been commissioned since 2014.

## **Current Position**

3. In April 2022, an inspection of the commissioned service was undertaken by HMIP. The report is appended (Appendix 1). The overall grading received was 'requires improvement' with five sections being graded 'inadequate'.
4. A swift and thorough response was made by the YOS Management Board who developed an improvement plan.
5. The Tower Hamlets and City of London Youth Justice Improvement Plan has been informed by the outcome from the HMIP inspection that took place in April 2022. This improvement plan focuses on strengthening the Youth Justice Management Board and the Youth Justice Service (YJS) to ensure that there is a 'child first' approach to meet the needs of children and to protect the public.
6. The YOS submitted their improvement plan (see Appendix 2) to the Youth Justice Board and to HMIP on 14 August 2022.

## **Proposals**

7. The inspection raised seven recommendations that need to be implemented to impact positively on the quality of the Tower Hamlets and the City of London YOS.

### **The Tower Hamlets and City of London Youth Justice Management Board should:**

**Recommendation 1.** Review its membership to ensure that the right people, at the right level of seniority, are included to engage actively in achieving better outcomes for YJS children.

**Recommendation 2.** Ensure that there are comprehensive quality assurance arrangements to understand performance and respond to the profile and needs of all children supervised by the YJS.

**Recommendation 3.** Make sure that all data and management information is accurate, reliable, and enables informed decision-making.

**Recommendation 4.** Review its out-of-court provision to ensure that the arrangements are effective and support diversion.

### **The Tower Hamlets and City of London Youth Justice Head of Service should:**

**Recommendation 5.** Improve the quality of assessment, planning, and service delivery work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others.

**Recommendation 6.** Ensure that robust contingency plans are in place for all children that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

**Recommendation 7.** Make sure that safeguarding and public protection arrangements are comprehensive and understood by all staff.

8. These recommendations have been adopted in full. The consequent plan aims to address the areas highlighted via the HMIP inspection. It has been developed with the involvement of the Youth Justice Management Board and the YJS.

## **Key Data**

9. No child resident in the City aged under 18 years has committed an offence in the last two years. One child committed an offence in the last five years. It is our view that our robust Early Help offer and outstanding social care service contribute to low levels of either offending or recidivism, in addition to our small volume of children.
10. Black children have been and are disproportionately impacted by Youth Justice, nationally and locally. Change is important so that black children have better outcomes and are not discriminated against. One key example is spotting poor legal advice regarding out-of-court disposals (OOC). Black children are more likely to be advised to say 'no comment'; this means that, instead of receiving a caution (an OOC), they would have to go to court and would likely receive a sentence – such as a referral order. The local and newly formed Out of Court Disposal Board will scrutinise the offer and take-up of OOCs, to bring about equity of diversion from the criminal justice system. A report on disproportionality will be provided to the YOS Management Board in December.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

11. Strategic implications – This report and appendices align with all four elements of the corporate strategy:  
Contribute to a flourishing society:
  - People are safe and feel safe.
  - People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
  - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
  - Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
12. Financial implications – The City of London contributes our allocation from the YJB to Tower Hamlets.
13. Resource implications – This is a commissioned service, so minimal staff resources are used to manage the contract. In addition, the Head of Service sits on the Youth Offending Management Board.

14. Legal implications – none.

15. Risk implications – There is a risk that, if the service does not improve, then any resident child who offends in the City will not get a good enough service.

16. Equalities implications – Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 racial disproportionality is central to the improvement plan, as is age. Children who offend are deliberately referred to as children, to recognise their development and vulnerability. The Serious Case Review of Child Q shows that black children are often seen as older and less vulnerable than their white peers. This is called ‘adultification’ and staff are provided with relevant training to ensure that children are seen as children first.

17. Climate implications – none

18. Security implications – none

## **Conclusion**

19. The main report introduces the inspection by HMIP and the subsequent improvement plan by the service designed to improve safety and wellbeing of children, the community and victims of crime. The appendices provide both reports.

## **Appendices**

- **Appendix 1** – An inspection of youth offending services in Tower Hamlets and City of London, HM Inspectorate of Probation, July 2022
- **Appendix 2** – Tower Hamlets & City of London Improvement Plan 2022–23

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