

Report to	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of meeting	24 th July 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Gill German, Lead Member for Education, Children and Families / Nicola Stubbins, Corporate Director: Social Services and Education
Head of Service	Rhiain Morrle, Head of Children's Services
Report author	Anest Gray Frazer, Service Manager Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service
Title	HMIP Joint Inspection of Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service

1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report is to feedback on the recently published His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation Inspection (HMIP) Report (Appendix A) following a HMIP Joint inspection of Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service (YJS).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide information regarding the recent Joint inspection of Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service (YJS)

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the contents of the report and comment as appropriate.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The timing of this inspection came at the most difficult time for the Conwy and Denbighshire YJS, a time when there had been significant changes and challenges. Despite this, the Inspectors found a strong and knowledgeable YJS leadership team who had been instrumental in working with staff to provide a service to children and young people. The Inspectors reported that the team had achieved this despite considerable staff shortages and significant strategic challenges, whilst also implementing new policies and ways of working. The Inspectors also found some positive examples of work being delivered with children and shared that this was a *testament to the commitment and resilience of the leadership team and staff group*.
- 4.2. The Inspectorate rated Conwy and Denbighshire YJS as *Requires Improvement*. The overall rating is determined by the aggregated ratings over three areas: Organisational Delivery, Court Disposals and Out of Court disposals.
- 4.3. The Inspection found the strategic leadership and governance of the service required considerable development. Although the Inspectors recognised that there had been efforts to refresh and refocus the Management Board, they felt that the Board was not yet functioning at an effective level and was lacking strategic direction and oversight.
- 4.4. Inspectors were of the opinion that vital members of the Board were absent and those that were present needed a greater depth of understanding of youth justice work and the unique role and function of the YJS.
- 4.5. The Inspection identified that the YJS Management Board needs to carry out a detailed needs analysis of the children accessing YJS services, as a priority, to fully understand what services are required and how best to meet YJS children's needs. They were also of the view that the Board needs to better understand what is contributing to the high first-time entry and reoffending rates to enable the Management Board and wider partnership to support the YJS in preventing children entering or escalating through the youth justice system.
- 4.6. It was also identified that Board members need to fully understand their role and responsibilities, and to expand their existing knowledge and skills, to ensure their effective strategic leadership of the YJS.
- 4.7. The Inspectors concluded that partnership work was mixed. They reported that they had seen some good examples of effective operational work, but, overall,

the partnership was not providing the right services, at the right times, in an accessible way for children.

- 4.8. As a collective of inspectorates, they were significantly concerned about the lack of resources and partnership focus provided to the YJS to support its work, particularly the longstanding failure of the health board to provide any of the necessary health services to the particularly vulnerable group of children that the YJS serve.
- 4.9. The Inspectors felt that Members of the Management Board and Statutory partners did not have a grasp on whether children were / are accessing their services or how effective the services are.
- 4.10. The Inspectors commented that they hoped that the report, feedback and recommendations would support existing action plans to hold the partnership to account and re-galvanize efforts to further strengthen the Board - with a view to ensuring the Board is in a position to move forward positively, provide effective partnership resources, and facilitate future effective leadership and governance.
- 4.11. Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Management Board accepts the findings. Progress on the HMIP recommendations have commenced and they have been incorporated into a revised Management Board / Youth Justice improvement plan, with leads identified on supporting each action (Appendix B). The plan will continue to be monitored by Chief Officers, YJB Cymru and the quarterly Management Board Meetings.
- 4.12. Martin Jones, CBE, Chief Inspector of Probation at HMIP has taken the unusual step of meeting with the Chief Executives of both Conwy and Denbighshire following the Inspection and there is a firm commitment by both counties to progress the improvement plan. There is also a firm commitment to improve partnership working to enable and ensure an outstanding service is delivered to the children and young people in Conwy and Denbighshire.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 5.1. A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire.
- 5.2. A learning and growing Denbighshire.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. The framework of core funding of Youth Justices Service is prescribed under legislative duties outlined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

6.2. The YJS budget is agreed by Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Management Board Statutory partners to ensure sustainability in taking forward programmes of work and to be rolled forward until modified to ensure the stability and security of funding over more than one financial year

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment will generally be required for decisions or proposals for change in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards. As this is a report on an inspection outcome a well-being Impact Assessment is not required

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. Discussion with the Lead Member formed a critical part of the inspection process.

8.2. Engagement has taken place with the Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Management Board

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. N/A

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. The inspection report highlights all the areas identified that require improvements.

10.2. There are possible risks to children and young people receiving service from the Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Services if Partner Agencies and the Management Board fail to respond to the recommendations made within the HMIP report.