

## West Mercia Youth Justice Partnership

### Responsible officer

Karen Bradshaw, Director of Children's Services

[karen.bradshaw@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:karen.bradshaw@shropshire.gov.uk)

[01743 254201](tel:01743 254201)

### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This paper introduces the West Mercia Youth Justice Partnership's youth justice plan. It also outlines the findings of the recent pilot inspection of the partnership by HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) and the partnership's consequent action plan.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and scrutiny members to scrutinise the inspection action plan and youth justice plan, in order to satisfy themselves that both plans address the recommendations of HMIP and are likely to lead to meaningful improvement to the service.

### 3.0 Background

- 3.1 West Mercia Youth Justice Partnership provides youth justice services across Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin on behalf of the four local authorities for these areas. West Mercia's police and crime commissioner hosts the service in Worcester, with front-line teams based in each of the four local authority areas. The service is a partnership between the four local authorities, the National Probation Service, West Mercia Police, the NHS and the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 3.2 The service is accountable to the service management board, comprised of senior officers from each partner agency. The board is chaired by Shropshire Council's director of children's services.
- 3.3 The partnership has undergone significant change during the previous 18 months. As well as significant change in the leadership team, it has restructured the services changed its information systems, and updated its assessment framework.
- 3.4 A recent pilot inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation found the service to require improvement. Of the twelve standards in the inspection, seven were found

to be good, four to require improvement and one to be inadequate. The service received 'good' ratings for the quality of practice standards in assessment, implementation and delivery of interventions and for joint working on out of court disposals

### 3.5 The inspectorate made five recommendations to the service:

- Develop a clear vision for the service, outlining its underpinning values.
- Reconfigure its decision-making process on out of court disposals to make sure that children and young people are considered for the full range of disposals available.
- Identify ways that information-sharing between YOT practitioners and local authority children's services departments can be improved through the use of technology underpinned by an effective information-sharing agreement.
- Develop the intervention planning skills of the workforce to make sure the plans drawn up between children and young people and their supervisors to implement court orders are comprehensive and based on the assessment.
- Make sure that practitioners understand child and adolescent mental services thresholds and are able to help those children and young people who do not meet the criteria for mental health services

### 3.6 Following the inspection the service produced an inspection plan. This has subsequently been merged into a wider youth justice plan. The plan contains four priorities:

#### Priority 1: Our People

- Promote in-service progression and ensure that appraisals are used effectively
- Strengthen staff development programmes
- Improve staff morale, motivation and encourage engagement

#### Priority 2: Our Partnerships

- Improve multi-agency engagement at high risk and decision making meetings
- Ensuring young people's mental health needs are met
- Review and improve policy and practice in relation to out of court disposal decision making thereby contributing to a reduction in the number of first time entrants

#### Priority 3: Our Performance, Quality and Practice

- Develop our quality assurance and performance framework in collaboration with our partners
- Ensure adequate interface with Children Services information systems
- Develop our practice and encourage innovation

#### Priority 4: Our Governance

- Communicate our vision and priorities to our staff, partners and stakeholders
- Develop Board Member links to WMYJS to support service development and improve engagement with staff and service users
- Anticipate and mitigate future risks to the long term delivery of our vision

3.7 The service's youth justice plan is attached as **appendix 1**.

<b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b>
None
<b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)</b>
Nick Bardsley Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
<b>Local Member</b>
All
<b>Appendices</b>
West Mercia Youth Justice Service – Youth Justice Plan