



**Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children Services**

Report to:	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>21 April 2023</b>
Subject:	<b>HMIP Inspection Report and Outcome - Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service</b>

**Summary:**

This report provides the Committee with the outcome and findings from the recent youth inspection of youth justice services in Lincolnshire undertaken by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in January 2023.

**Actions Required:**

The Committee is invited to review the findings and the judgements from the inspection report and agree the next steps in respect of the recommendations contained within the inspection report.

## **1. Background**

Oversight and the effectiveness of youth justice services across England and Wales is currently measured and inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). This takes place through a cycle of inspection based on a random and risk led criteria with the previous inspection in Lincolnshire having taken place in December 2015. The inspection programme has been significantly interrupted and delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic with inspections initially paused and then moved on to a virtual basis. At the current time, inspections have now returned to the pre-pandemic methodology which consist of visits by the inspectorate team to the local authority.

On 18 November 2022, Lincolnshire was given notice by HMIP of the intention to inspect the Youth Offending Service. As planned, the fieldwork element of the inspection commenced on 9 January 2023 and inspectors were on site for this week undertaking a wide range of activity to validate and evidence their judgements.

The national approach to inspecting youth offending services by HMIP through the current inspection consists of three domains which are set out within the inspection report and are as follows:

- **Organisational delivery (Domain one)**  
This examines how the service is run and led, strategically. It looks at workloads and staffing levels and whether there are arrangements for learning and development. Inspectors will look at any partnerships and services there may be and whether the right information/data and analysis is available, and facilities are in place to support staff.
- **Court disposals (Domain two)**  
Inspectors look at the assessment, planning, implementation and delivery and the reviewing processes being delivered to children and young people sentenced by the courts in Lincolnshire.
- **Out-of-court disposals (Domain three)**  
Inspectors look at the assessment, planning, and implementation and delivery being delivered to children and young people, and also at the overarching policy and provision for out-of-court work.
- **Resettlement**  
Inspectors look at the policy and provision for resettlement work (those children returning home following periods in youth custody), which is illustrated by inspecting a small number of custodial cases.

The inspection consisted of the submission of significant evidence in advance against the national inspection framework criteria and also a number of focus groups with key partners, staff, managers, young people and parents. More than 50 cases of children were inspected and assessed against a robust criteria and this also involved case interviews with more than 30 practitioners. In total eight inspectors conducted the field work during the week which demonstrated a robust and intensive examination of all aspects of both strategic governance and operational practice.

The initial feedback on the inspection was provided to the Executive Director of Children Services on 25 January 2023 and a draft report was provided for factual accuracy purposes on 13 February 2023. The final inspection report was published on the HMIP website along with a press release on 4 April 2023 and is provided as an appendix to this report.

The legislative basis for the delivery of youth justice work is set out through the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) which also lays out the minimum statutory requirements for Youth Offending teams in England and Wales. The Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service (YOS) Strategic Management Board provides the overarching governance arrangements and strategic direction for the service upon which the respective partners agree to abide. Therefore, the inspection also examines the strength of partnership work and how this contributes to support children and maintaining public protection and community safety.

The YOS management board is responsible for ensuring that the principle aim of preventing offending by children and young people in Lincolnshire is promoted and that the work of the service is focused on achieving local targets and those set nationally by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). The board seeks to ensure that the service works to recognised standards and that all work is underpinned by the desire to achieve the very best outcomes for children and young people who come to the attention of the youth justice system in Lincolnshire.

The management board is a significant area of focus for the inspectorate, and it seeks assurance that the representatives from partner agencies should be strategic decision makers to ensure that board business is progressed and contributes to the development of the annual Youth Justice Plan. The management board is expected to provide the overall strategic direction for youth justice services in Lincolnshire, and monitor objectives linked to key performance indicators, within the national framework established by the Youth Justice Board and other locally agreed measures.

## 2. Conclusion

The attached report and findings by HMIP have concluded that Lincolnshire YOS has achieved an overall rating of 'Outstanding' by HMIP. The inspectorate also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Good'. The achievement of receiving an overall outstanding judgement is evidenced by the fact that to date only approximately 12 of the 130 areas in England and Wales inspected have received a rating of outstanding.

The following sections below highlight just some of the many significant strengths that inspectors observed on their visit to Lincolnshire:

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*'Our inspection of the YOS identified a cohesive and integrated approach to working positively with children. Strong strategic and operational partnerships support staff in the delivery of work with children, and we found this reflected in high-quality practice, particularly across all elements of assessment, planning, delivery, and review within court disposals.'*

*'Lincolnshire's leadership and governance arrangements are a strength. The YOS management board sets a well communicated clear vision and strategy, and strategic partnership arrangements are mature and collaborative. Board members have sufficient seniority to make decisions and commit resources from their own agencies. They model positive behaviours of partnership working, and this is reflected in their operational staff's work with children.'*

*'Lincolnshire YOS is a well-led and well-managed service. There is an open and receptive learning culture, which enables motivated staff to achieve positive outcomes for children within the YOS cohort. Their overall rating of 'Outstanding' is reflective of the sustained efforts and commitment of senior leaders and operational staff across the partnership over a number of years.'*

The work of the Joint Diversionary Panel has featured within this Committee on many occasions, and we are proud that this area of practice was graded as outstanding in its own right. Our collaboration with Lincolnshire Police was highly commended and inspectors were able to see a very strong commitment to multi-agency working through work with the Courts, Probation, Health and many other partners who contribute to service delivery.

The report sets out four recommendations to further improve practice which are as follows:

- Ensure consistency of safety and wellbeing casework in out-of-court disposals, across all the YOS locality teams
- Ensure effective management oversight of all out-of-court disposals
- Improve arrangements and provision to increase the number of children in education, employment or training (NEET) within the YOS cohort
- Work to ensure that the staff and volunteer ethnicity profile properly reflects the cohort of YOS children.

For assurance purposes, the recommendations detailed above are already aligned to the strategic priorities set out by the board and were already recognised and being responded to prior to the inspection. Nonetheless they will form an integral part of the service action plan and this year’s youth justice plan to ensure continued oversight and progress. These areas will also be monitored by the Strategic Management Board as part of a drive toward on-going improvement.

It is clear from the report that HMIP observed a highly motivated and skilled workforce in Lincolnshire who work in close collaboration with their colleagues in seeking the very best outcomes for children. The report also reflects our commitment to working in a child first and trauma informed way by acting proportionately, restoratively whilst also delivering high quality interventions. The entire staff group are rightly proud of this outcome, and it represents a deserved recognition for their practice over a sustained period.

Finally, the inspection report is seen as a clear endorsement of our work within Future4Me as all of the elements within the service were scrutinised and deemed to provide a strong offer to children and families. The inspection outcome is a hugely positive reflection of our partnership approach in Lincolnshire to working with children and young people and offering effective support and intervention.

### **3. Consultation**

#### **a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

Not applicable

### **4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	An inspection of youth offending services in Lincolnshire – April 2023

### **5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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