

# **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 JULY 2020**

## **HMIP INSPECTION OF YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM (YOT)**

Report from: James Williams, Director of Public Health  
Ian Sutherland, Director of Children and Adults Services

Author: Andrew Willetts, Head of Service for Partnership  
Commissioning, Resources and Youth justice

### **Summary**

This report is to update Members on the outcomes of the HMIP inspection of the Youth Offending Team (YOT), that took place during 24 to 28 February 2020, and which was published on 4 June 2020. Overall, Medway YOT was rated as: 'Requires improvement'. This rating has been determined by HMIP following their assessment of the YOT in three specific areas of its work, referred to as 'domains'.

There are 12 'standards' shared across the domains. Each standard reflects a specific evidence based element of YOT work underpinned by existing models or particular frameworks that should inform the work of the YOT and wider partnership. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children and young people who have offended.

#### **1. Budget and policy framework**

- 1.1. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requires Local Authorities to have a Youth Offending Team (YOT). Each YOT must have a plan which is annually updated to set out how youth justice will be delivered locally within available resources.
- 1.2. This inspection was part of HMIP four-year programme of youth offending service inspections. HMIP have inspected and rated Medway Youth Offending Team across three broad areas:
  - The arrangements for organisational delivery of the service,
  - The quality of work done with children and young people sentenced by the courts, and
  - The quality of out-of-court disposal work.
- 1.3. The YOT responsibilities are funded through contributions from the statutory partner agencies in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The

table below outlines the current funding from each of the partner agencies. Each partner's contributions are reviewed annually.

<b>Delegated Funds from Partner Agencies</b>	<b>Amount £'s</b>
OPCC	£90,353
Probation	£2,500
Health (Public Health)	£56,000
Local Authority	£158,370
YJB	£304,366
<b>Total</b>	<b>£611,589</b>

<b>Other</b>	
NHS for trauma informed practice/ training	£56,000
NHS for restorative justice programme/ training	£25,000

- 1.4. This report has been included on the Forward Plan in accordance with Section 10 (General Exception) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. However, this report has been circulated separately to the main agenda. Therefore, the Cabinet is asked to accept this report as urgent to ensure that it can consider the outcome of the HMIP Inspection at the earliest opportunity.

## 2. Background

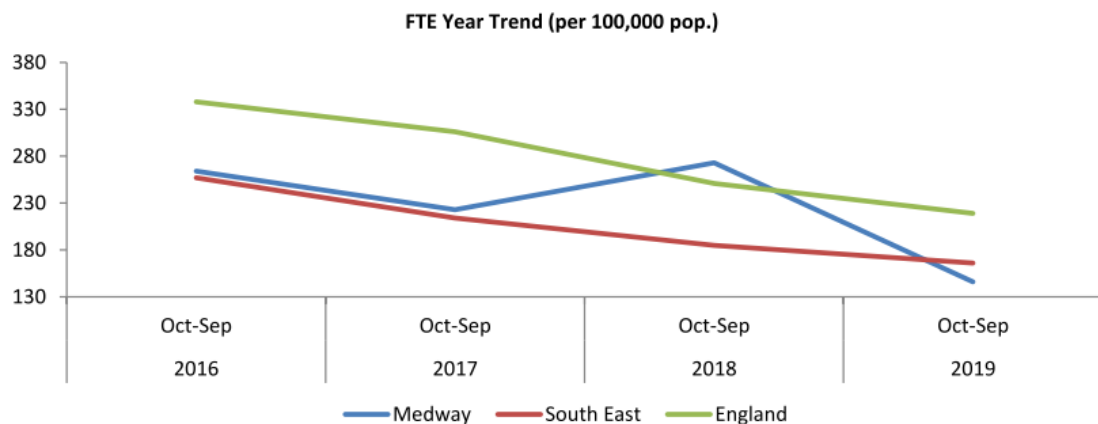
- 2.1. Although Medway was rated requires improvement, based on the inspection framework and scoring mechanism, it was actually only 1 point away from a 'good' judgement. The inspection report (Appendix A) highlighted a number of improvements since the peer review in 2018. Based on inspections reports of similar authorities, it was likely that a 'requires improvement' judgement was the expected outcome. The narrative within the report does however reflect the sustained progress made by the YOT over the last 18 months.
- 2.2. HMIP identified that senior managers drive the direction and ambition of the YOT, demonstrating their willingness and ability to advocate for children and young people to achieve the best outcomes for them.
- 2.3. HMIP saw examples of excellent case management and practitioners working well to understand the behaviour of children and young people and their aspirations for their future. However, there was too much inconsistency in the quality of practice, especially relating to girls and those at risk of exploitation.
- 2.4. HMIP commented that the Youth Justice Partnership Board has good representation from key agencies but has too many new members so was unable to evidence its understanding of the specific issues for YOT children and young people or its strategies as a partnership, to address these needs.
- 2.5. HMIP noted the planned addition of a dedicated YOT data and intelligence officer should enable the board to better identify the YOT's strengths/ areas for development and improve its focus on evidence-based service provision.
- 2.6. HMIP commented this is a busy YOT, which works well in a number of key areas and is making steady progress to develop its service provision.

### 3. Advice and analysis

- 3.1. This report and internal analysis highlights the fact that Medway is moving in the right direction. There have been incremental improvements from previous reports evidenced by the findings of the peer review and pilot inspection. Current performance data also provides assurance that the service is improving (see figure 1).
- 3.2. First time entrants have seen a significant improvement in Medway. During 2018, Medway First Time Entrants (FTE) were above South East and National figures. Although the number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system has reduced, the number of young people in contact with the police where no further action has taken place, increased. Work is underway with Kent Police to understand the reasons for increase in no further actions by the police. This piece of work is ongoing and is reported to the Youth Justice Partnership Plan.

Figure 1. First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice System.

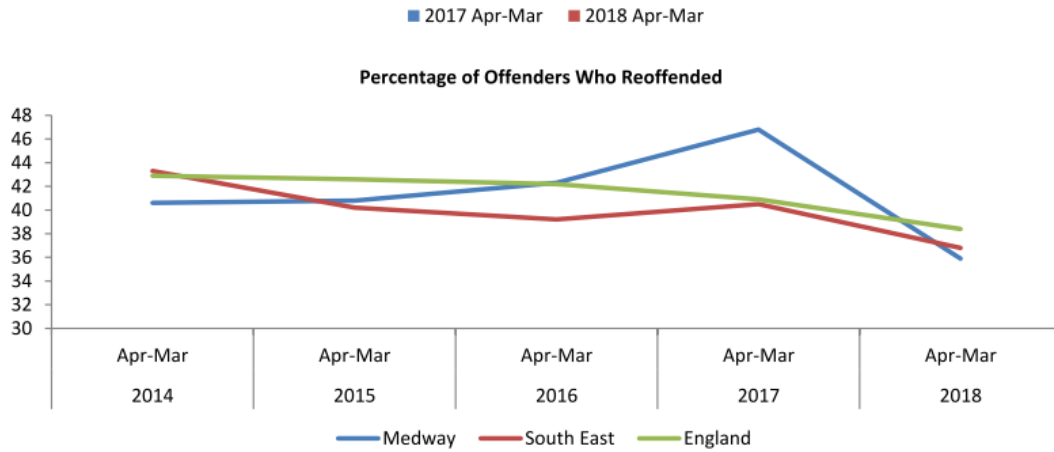
The below graph reflects the reduction in first time entrants now at 145 young people.



- 3.3. The reoffending rates in Medway had been rising year on year since 2014 through to 2018. This trend has now reversed. The current reoffending rate places Medway below the National and also the South East reoffending rate. Improvements correspond with the appointment of a new Head of Service at the end of 2017 and implementation of the Child First practice model and changes to the Youth Justice Partnership plan. Alongside this, we have also seen a reduction in those reoffending after an Out of Court disposal. This means we are having an impact earlier in the lives of children at risk of offending.

Figure 2. Reoffending rate.

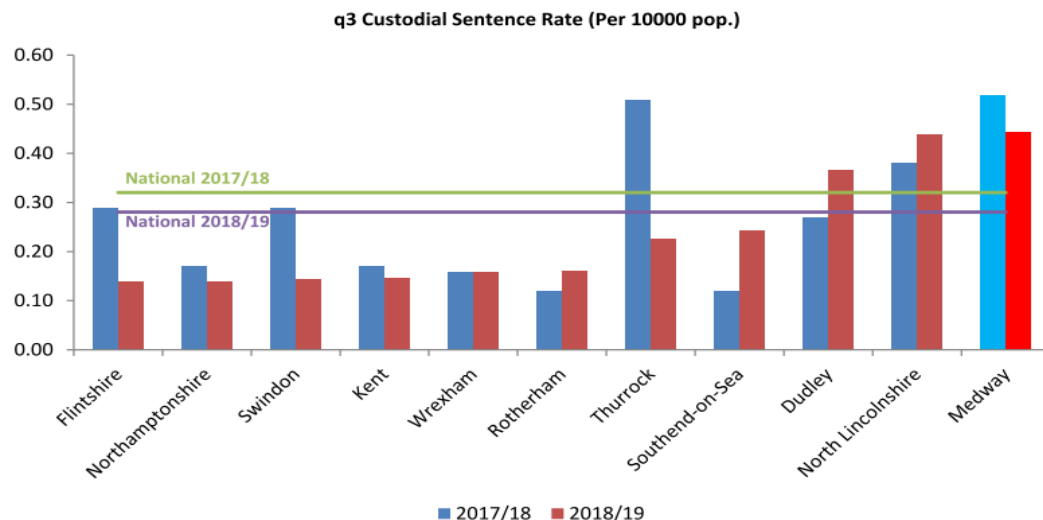
The below table reflects that in 2017, Medway reoffending rate was at 48%. In 2018 this is now at 35%. Our current data for 2019 shows the trajectory remains positive. Example for Quarter 4 for 2019 reflected 10% reoffending rate.



- 3.4. One of Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board’s focused areas for the next 12 months is to reduce the numbers of children entering custody. There were 12 custodial sentences in 2018-19 which is the same as seen for the same time period of the preceding year.
- 3.5. There have been a number of custodial sentences issued to young people (9) who have had no previous orders or out of court disposals. The YOT team would not have been aware of these young people to do preventative work. This identifies we need to do more with wider system partners in Early Help and Children’s Services to ensure those at risk of entering the criminal justice system are supported.

Figure 3. Custody rate.

The below graph reflects only a minimal improvement in Custody rate per 10,000 population. In 2017/18, Medway was at 0.48%. In 2018/19 this was 0.45%.



- 3.6. Overall, the 12 Standards judged against the HMIP criteria, Medway YOT received:
- 7 areas of good
  - 4 areas of requires improvement
  - 1 areas of inadequate
- 3.7. Within each standard there were a further 23 more detailed indicators. The findings from this assessment reinforce the progress Medway has made to date. Based on this detailed assessment Medway had:
- 7 Areas of Outstanding practice
  - 9 Areas of Good practice
  - 5 Areas that Requires improvement
  - 2 Areas of inadequate practice
- 3.8. The attached improvement plan (Appendix B) focuses on the recommendation and learning.

#### 4. Risk management

- 4.1. Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Decline in judgement seeing the YOT and its partnership arrangements move to inadequate.	Reputational risk and improvement notice issued.	Improvement plan. National standards audit. Agreed 3 year strategic plan.	D2
Reduction in budget from Medway or partnership arrangements.	Decline in resources impacting on caseloads and delivery.	3 year strategy identifying budget that needs to be sustained. Partnership bids to Home Office, PCC and MHCLG. Joint working arrangements with Violence reduction unit, Medway Task Force and Serious Youth Violence projects.	C2

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Partnerships agreement to deliver against new areas identified within the HMIP findings and National Standards Audits.	Partners continue to deliver services to young people in previous ways, not meeting the crime and disorder act.	Improvement plan. Strategic plan. Service level agreement.	D2

## 5. Consultation

5.1. The improvement plan was signed off on:

- 25 June at the Children's Improvement Board
- 13 July 2020 at the Youth Justice Partnership Board.

5.2. The Cabinet considered and agreed the improvement plan on 9 June 2020.

## 6. Climate change implications

6.1. Medway YOT has the equipment to deliver virtual working through tablets/ phones. We have been developing this area of work over the last 3 months (including a virtual court) meaning staff are now travelling less reducing CO<sup>2</sup> omissions.

6.2. A number of YOT programmes (reparation) have an environmental impact.

## 7. Financial implications

7.1. Medway YOT is funded by contributions from statutory partner agencies in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and reviewed on an annual basis as set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report.

## 8. Legal implications

8.1. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement for each year, a plan (a "Youth Justice Plan") setting out how Youth Justice Services in their area are to be provided, funded and will deliver against their targets.

## 9. Recommendations

9.1. The Committee is asked to note the findings of the HMIP Inspection of the Youth Offending Team and the Youth Offending Team Improvement Plan, as set out in Appendix B to the report.

## Lead officer contact

Andrew Willetts  
Head of Partnership Commissioning, Resources and Youth Justice  
Medway Council – Gun Wharf  
01634 338197  
[Andrew.willetts@medway.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.willetts@medway.gov.uk)

## Appendices

Appendix A: HMIP Inspection Report  
Appendix B: Improvement Plan

## Background papers

None