

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22ND OCTOBER 2013

**SUBJECT: BLAENAU GWENT & CAERPHILLY YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE
 HMI PROBATION SHORT QUALITY SCREENING INSPECTION 2013**

REPORT BY: ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Elected Members of the findings of the Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Youth Offending Service HMI Probation Short Quality Screening (SQS) Inspection undertaken in June 2013 attached at Appendix 1 and the associated Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 2.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Overall, they found that the Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Youth Offending Service (YOS) were performing well. YOS staff were highly motivated and spoke positively about the organisation and their contribution to the work. Considerable improvements had been made since the YOS's last inspection in 2010 in particular to the work to safeguard children and protect the public. Efforts should now be focussed on ensuring that all assessments and plans are of good quality. Given the commitment of staff and managers they anticipate that the standards observed in the majority of cases can be replicated across all the work.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 All Wales Youth Offending Strategy.
- 3.2 Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership Plan 2011- 2014.
- 3.3 Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Plan 2011 – 2014
- 3.4 Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Youth Justice Plan 2012 - 2014

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 A Short Quality Screening (SQS) is a three day inspection running from Monday lunchtime to Wednesday afternoon. It is undertaken at short notice, being announced, wherever possible to the YOS manager, on the Friday two weeks before fieldwork commences. The notice period gives enough time for inspection arrangements to be made, while also ensuring that the YOS is inspected "as at" is without the opportunity for preparation.

- 4.2 The SQS inspection is undertaken by HMI Probation. It is designed to provide a robust inspection of case management practice, while also being relatively low profile so as to maximize the opportunity for engagement with staff and managers on any improvement required. A team of inspectors from HMI Probation assesses the quality of practice at the start of the criminal sentence in a representative sample of statutory cases that have been running typically for six weeks to three months. Each case assessment is undertaken in conjunction with the allocated case manager, to support increased YOS learning from the cases.
- 4.3 The findings from the inspection were overall very positive. The full report is attached at Appendix 1 for member's information.

The most positive aspects of work that they found in Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly included:

- The substantial improvement in practice since the previous inspection. Although driven by the management team this had been embraced by a staff group committed to their work and the community they serve.
- Engagement of children and young people and their parents/carers which then provided a firm foundation from which to work to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

They identified only one area for improvement:

- Consistent management oversight to ensure:
 - a. the quality of assessments of risk of harm to others
 - b. the quality of plans to address vulnerability

The area for improvement has been incorporated into the attached SQS Inspection Improvement Plan, along with areas identified by the YOS themselves during their self assessment work in preparation for the SQS Inspection. This Improvement Plan is attached at Appendix 2.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report is for information purposes so the Council's equalities process does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The views of those consulted have been incorporated into the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That members note the content of this report along with the content of the YOS Short Quality Screening Inspection report and the associated Improvement Plan

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That Elected Members are appraised of the Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Youth Offending Service's Short Quality Screening Inspection Report and the Inspection Improvement Plan.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

Author: Michaela Rogers, Service Manager
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Cllr Robin Woodyatt, Cabinet Member, Social Services
Children's Services Divisional Management Team
YOS Management Team and staff

Background Papers:

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 SQS Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Published Report 2013
Appendix 2 YOS SQS Inspection Improvement Plan 2013/14