

***Gwynedd and Ynys Mon YJS***  
***HMIP Inspection Nov 2023***  
***Improvement Plan***

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Gwynedd Mon YJS Management Board and Staff are very pleased with an overall '**Good**' rating from our recent HMIP Youth Justice Inspection. We want to send our thanks to our partners in both Local Authorities, the Local Criminal Justice System, and the Voluntary Sector for their support during preparation and the Inspection week.

The inspectorate identified; strong senior partnership arrangements that were driving and resourcing effective work with children and families, a staffing group that were well supported and supervised, and that children and parents were actively involved in planning and delivery of support.

We have areas for improvement most of which were not a great surprise to us, and our responsibility now is to act on these to ensure we are providing high quality support for the children and communities of Gwynedd and Ynys Mon.

The YJS Management Board and senior managers have already started the process of improvement, a meeting was held on the 31<sup>st</sup> January to review our draft report and findings for the purpose of effective and efficient response, we have until the 5<sup>th</sup> April to submit our Improvement Plan.

We are particularly pleased and proud that YJS staff were specifically highlighted in the report for the high quality of engagement and support they provide to children and their families. And we should not forget the children many of whom gave their time to speak with and provide feedback to the inspectors, we are very thankful for this.

**2. Findings (HMIP Report)**

2.1 This inspection is part of our programme of youth justice service (YJS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Gwynedd & Ynys Môn YJS across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work.

Overall, Gwynedd & Ynys Môn YJS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Requires improvement'.

The service is child focused, committed to helping children to desist from further offending. An individualised approach helps to ensure that children's diversity needs are recognised, and support put in place to help them thrive and achieve positive decision-making. Staff and volunteers are a strength. They are kind, thoughtful, work well together as one team, and are positive advocates for the children they supervise. The service collects the voices of children and their parents or carers effectively. This informs the development of services and service improvements. Staff have access to a range of interventions to help children and their parents or carers. In particular, the Tim Emrallt (problematic and harmful sexual behaviour) offer is excellent and making a real difference in supporting practitioners to improving children's attitudes and behaviours. The Be di'r Sgôr (substance misuse service) provides high-quality interventions.

The strategic management board has some committed members who work well to mobilise financial resources for the YJS. Since the pandemic, however, there has been a disconnect with frontline practitioners. This has left some staff not fully understanding the work of the board. Furthermore, there has been a notable absence from health and education partners at board meetings. The YJS has identified disproportionately in poorer education outcomes for its cohort of children, and the need for a speech and language resource. These findings need a more urgent focus at a strategic level. There also needs to be a greater drive and focus at a strategic level to ensure that YJS children are receiving the best possible service and the YJS is supported to deliver high quality interventions.

Engagement and the quality of the relationships that practitioners have with children are a strength, but work associated with supporting children's safety and wellbeing and their potential to cause harm to others is variable. This needs to improve. Our inspection found that, across court and out-of-court work, not all staff understood and applied the systems and processes consistently to keep children safe and prevent them from causing harm to others.

The YJS can be rightly proud of the way it reaches out to children with compassion to help them live out their best lives. It must now focus on using the findings from this inspection as a springboard to bring about further change. In this report, we make seven recommendations to improve further the work of the Gwynedd & Ynys Môn YJS. We trust that they will assist the service as it continues its improvement journey.

## 2.2 Local Preparation

At the Strategic Management Board (SMB) in January 2024, the Board invited members of the Operational Management Group (OMG) and management staff to join them to review the Inspection draft report and to begin the response process. The following Improvement Plan has been informed by the discussions and contributions made by the group.

In addition the OMG had a further meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March where additional contributions were made to response planning.

### 3. Domain 1 (Organisational delivery)

#### 3.1

##### Recommendations

1. *Ensure consistent attendance at the management board from senior education and health leaders, to achieve positive education and health outcomes for all children.*
2. *Address the disconnect between the strategic management board and frontline practitioners.*
3. *Address the gap in speech, language, and communication provision for children and ensure that services are provided which assess and respond to children's communication needs.*

<b>Area for Improvement (R1)</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
<p>a) <i>The frequency of attendance and representation at the SMB needs to be regular across all statutory partners.</i></p>	<p>SMB Chair will reinforce the importance of consistent attendance at YJS Board Meetings</p> <p>YJS Admin will keep an attendance log and provide a report to the SMB chair twice yearly.</p> <p>Representatives will be required to report to the SMB on representation and attendance when issues occur.</p> <p>New requirements will be added to the MB Terms of Reference.</p>	<p>SMB Chair</p> <p>YJS Manager and Administration</p> <p>All SMB members</p>	<p>Ongoing from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.</p>
<p>b) <i>There has been a notable absence from health and education partners at board meetings.</i></p>	<p>SMB Chair and Service Manager will write to Directors of Education and of Health outlining the findings of the Inspection and request full cooperation in the actions outlined in R1a.</p>	<p>SMB Chair, Service manager</p>	<p>April 2024</p>

<p><i>c) The YJS business plan (2023–2025) is not explicit in identifying or addressing disproportionality and the needs of children with different protected characteristics.</i></p>	<p>The G&amp;YM YJ Plan for 2024-25 will have a section on Disproportionality and protected characteristics, this will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gender</i></li> <li>• <i>Additional Learning Needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Mental Health and Neuro-Developmental</i></li> <li>• <i>Ethnicity</i></li> <li>• <i>Speech and Language</i></li> <li>• <i>Care Experienced Children</i></li> </ul>	<p>SMB Chair YJS Manager</p>	<p>July 2024</p>
<p><i>d) The statutory requirement of a probation officer in the YJS is absent.</i></p>	<p>The MB Chair and members (supported by the service manager) will continue their representation and communications with Local NPS and National HMPPS to secure a Probation Officer secondment within the service.</p> <p>In addition, the service will support the actions of Yot Managers Cymru and YJB Wales in their negotiations with HMPPS in order to address the national issues around Probation secondments to YJ.</p> <p>The Board/Chair will write to Local NPS Lead and Wales HMPPS to notify them of HMIP findings G&amp;M YJS inspection.</p>	<p>Management Board Members Management Board Chair Service Manager</p>	<p>May 2024</p>

## 3.2

Area for Improvement (R2)	Action	Who	When
<p>a) Since the pandemic, there has been a disconnect with frontline practitioners. This has left some staff not fully understanding the work of the board.</p> <p>b) The induction experience of board members is variable.</p>	<p>A new <b>Service Induction Guidance Manual has been developed (Dec 2023)</b>, the document if for Staff, Volunteers and MB members and includes details on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MB visits to YJ Office</li> <li>• Staff representation at SMB meetings</li> <li>• Key actions and decisions from SMB meetings to be shared with staff and volunteers.</li> </ul> <p>New Induction Guidance Manual to be reviewed by MB in April 2024 meeting.</p> <p>The Operational Management Group (OMG) will review its Role and Terms of Reference and report to the SMB on changes and development, with the intention of ensuring there is a clear accountability to the SMB and no barrier between the service and the SMB is being created. <b>(Agreed by OMG on the 20/3/24)</b></p>	Management Board Members  MB Chair  Service Manager  OMG Chair, Service manager, Operational Managers.	June 2024  May 2024
<p>c) Volunteers and YJS staff should be given more opportunities to contribute to the youth justice plan.</p>	<p>Staff and Volunteers will be invited by the SMB and Operational Management Group to review the Youth justice Plan before submission to YJB,</p>		
<p>d) Benchmarking of performance against HM Inspectorate of Probation thematic</p>	<p>All HMIP Thematic Inspection Reports will be shared with, and reviewed at, SMB and OMG meetings.</p>		

<i>reports and other research findings is needed.</i>	<p>Reports will be prepared to inform the Board on the services position in respect to Thematic findings and recommendations.</p> <p>Standing item for SMB agenda when appropriate.</p>	MB Chair Service Manager	Ongoing from the 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024.
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## 3.3

Area for Improvement (R3)	Action	Who	When
<p><i>a) The SMB needs to be more proactive and urgent in its response to identified need – for example, providing a speech and language resource.</i></p> <p><i>b) Education, training, and employment, and speech, language, and communication outcomes for children are not high enough.</i></p>	<p>The SMB will continue with its communications with Regional Speech, Language and Communications Service to explore options for secondment or support.</p> <p>The SMB will continue with its commitment to secure funding for Speech Language and Communication resourcing.</p> <p>In reference to action <b>R1(b)</b>, the SMB will priorities the ETE and Communication needs of children in the justice system by requesting reports on the factors affecting engagement with education and training for the next 12 months. This will include National KPI data and local/cohort data and Individual Case studies.</p> <p><i>Explore options for regional YJ SpL&amp;C commissioning</i></p>	<p>MB Chair, Health and Education Representatives and Service Manager</p> <p>MB Chair, Health and Education Representatives and Service Manager</p> <p><i>Regional YJS (Chairs and Service Managers)</i></p>	Ongoing and reviewed quarterly

<p>c) <i>There is very limited evidence of robust conversations about protected characteristics and diversity at SMB meetings.</i></p>	<p>Quarterly reports will be provided to the SMB on protected characteristics and diversity levels within the cohort of children known to the justice system, this will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gender</i></li> <li>• <i>Additional Learning Needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Mental Health and Neuro-Developmental</i></li> <li>• <i>Ethnicity</i></li> <li>• <i>Speech and Language</i></li> <li>• <i>Care Experienced Children</i></li> </ul> <p>Quarterly reports and responses from the SMB and Service will be included in the annual YJ Plan.</p>	<p>MB Chair SMB Members and Service Manager.</p>	
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#### 4. Domain 2 (Court Orders)

##### 4.1

###### Recommendations

1. Improve the quality of assessment and planning work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others.
2. Ensure that management oversight is consistently effective in reviewing Asset Plus activity and contingency planning, so that practitioners are clear about what they need to improve.
3. Provide practitioners with comprehensive guidance that supports the completion of effective out-of-court assessment and planning work.
4. Improve the knowledge and understanding of practitioners to identify when children are being exploited so that timely action is taken to keep children safe.

Area for Improvement (R1)	Action	Who	When
<p>a) Assessment activity did not always identify all the risks to the child's safety and wellbeing.</p> <p>b) Assessments to identify all relevant factors linked to keeping other people safe were weak.</p> <p>c) In some cases, it was unclear to whom the child presented a risk, and the nature of this risk.</p>	<p>There is a need to commission Safety and Well-being and Risk of Harm Training for all staff within the service.</p> <p>The service manager and operational managers will scope available training providers S&amp;WB Training with local partners (Children's Services and Safeguarding Board) to practice consistency.</p> <p>The service will explore Risk Management Training options with;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probation LDU</li> <li>• YJB</li> <li>• YMC</li> </ul> <p>And commission appropriate training for case management staff and wider supporting staff</p> <p><i>(Consult with Local Authority Training Department to ensure parity of commissioning and practice)</i></p>	<p>Service Manager</p> <p>Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p> <p>Service Manager</p> <p>Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p>	<p>Complete by June 2024</p> <p>Complete by July 2024</p>
<p>d) Practitioners did not consistently gather relevant information from other agencies and analyse controls and interventions to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child.</p>	<p>The service will reinstate bi-monthly Case Management Forum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review quality of assessments.</li> <li>• Promote high standard of safety and well being and Risk of Harm analysis.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Manager</p>	<p>May 2024</p>

<p>e) Where necessary, practitioners collected information from other agencies but, this was not always integrated into their assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Forum will be chaired by the Operational Manager with responsibility for Quality Assurance.</li> </ul> <p>The forum will also review the quality of information requested from other agencies in the assessment and planning stages.</p> <p>The service will commission Analytical Skills training for the Case Management staff, to ensure that the information gathered from assessments and from partners is used to improve Safety and Wellbeing and Risk of Harm Assessment, Planning and Review.</p> <p>Analysis and shared risk</p>	<p>Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p>	<p>Commission Training by Aug 2024</p> <p>Review improvement through QA Audit Oct 2024, report to MB Dec 2024.</p>
<p>f) Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) training is not delivered to all staff, to provide a more robust understanding of the breadth and depth of the work needed for effective risk management.</p>	<p>MAPPA training for all case management staff has taken place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2024 (Provider: Regional MAPPA coordinator for North Wales)</p> <p>Reinstate mandatory annual MAPPA training for the service as part of Service Training Plan. This to be reviewed by OMG annually.</p>	<p>Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners OMG Chair</p>	<p>Ongoing from the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan 2024</p>

## 4.2

Area for Improvement (R2)	Action	Who	When
<p>a) Contingency planning was not consistent. Arrangements needed to be much more precise about the actions required if the level of risk increased.</p> <p>b) Controls to maximise safety and wellbeing had been examined well but contingency planning was particularly weak and required further attention.</p> <p>c) Practitioners did not always respond effectively to changes in factors related to risk of harm, which meant that plans to protect others from harm were not adjusted.</p>	<p>As part of the training commissioning arrangements outlined in <b>R1 (a,b,c)</b> actions the service will require the training provider to ensure contingency planning around safety and wellbeing and Risk of Harm are included.</p> <p>Contingency planning will be included in development of the new case management quality assurance processes to be developed <b>(R2 e)</b> ensuring consistency and effective monitoring.</p>	Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners	Oct-Nov 2024
<p>d) Additionally, decisions taken at risk management panels to keep others safe were not always actioned in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The service will review the operation and function of the 'Risk Panel' with a view to improve decisions and actions are recorded and the panel contributes to improved safety and wellbeing and Risk of Harm management.</p>	Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners	May 2024
<p>e) Management oversight addressing safety and well-being, and risk of harm work is not consistent.</p>	<p>The service will develop a New Quality Assurance process and policy in-line with both YJB Case Management Guidance and HMIP Inspection findings;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Desistance</i></li> <li>• <i>Child First/Strengths</i></li> </ul>	Service Manager	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Safety and Wellbeing</i></li> <li>• <i>Risk of Harm</i></li> <li>• <i>Contingency Planning</i></li> <li>• <i>Recording</i></li> <li>• <i>Analysis</i></li> <li>• <i>Outcomes</i></li> </ul>	Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners	Sept 2024
f) Not all managers have received the appropriate level of training, for their role or responsibilities, in the last 12 months.  g) Not all staff have had a formal appraisal.	<p>The service will update Staff Training Plan and appraise the management training for Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners.</p> <p>The service will update the Supervision and Appraisal Policy (Included in the Service Induction Guidance Manual, <b>Domain 1 R2a</b>)</p> <p><i>Need to refer to GC Guidance</i></p> <p>The Service will report annually to the SMB on staff Supervision and Appraisal</p>	<p>Service Manager</p> <p>Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p> <p>Service Manager</p> <p>Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p>	Oct 2024    Feb 2025
h) Interventions specifically for girls	<p>The Service will audit resources within the service that specifically target support for girls.</p> <p>The service will enquire with colleagues in Wales and the YJB and the Regional Practice Forum, best practice with regards to developing resources with Girls</p> <p>The service will consult with girls known to the service what type of resources and support would address their needs</p>	<p>Service Manager</p> <p>Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p> <p>Case managers and supporting staff.</p> <p>Participation worker</p>	Sept 2024.

## 4.3

Area for Improvement (R4)	Action	Who	When
<p>Shared with Domain 3 (OofCD)</p> <p>a) Learning, development, and training are not yet leading to effective and consistent work to address safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.</p>	<p>The service will review the Service Training Plan and ensure training on Safety and Wellbeing and Risk are key elements of the Plan.</p> <p>Refer to Domain 2 <b>R1 a,b,c</b></p>	<p>Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p>	June-July 2024
<p>b) More activity is needed to embrace fully the range of protected characteristics that children possess.</p>	<p>Training will be provided to staff and managers on Protected Characteristic and diversity/disproportionality.</p> <p>Decision making consideration on protected characteristics and diversity will be factored into a review of the Health and Education Panels – data collected for reporting to OMG and SMB.</p>	<p>Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p>	Aug 2024
<p>c) We identified failures to appropriately consider or respond to exploitation concerns and suggest this is an area that requires additional training, understanding and focus by the service.</p>	<p>The service will request Child Exploitation Leads from both Counties and North Wales Police provide Exploitation and Extra Familial Harm briefings/Training for YJS staff and managers, this will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and Identification</li> <li>• Child Exploitation Panel Process and Practice.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners</p>	June 2024

	• Modern Day Slavery and National Referral Mechanism.		
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## 5. Domain 3 (Out of Court Disposals)

### 5.1

Area for Improvement (R3)	Action	Who	When
a) Areas relating to the safety and wellbeing of children were not explicitly covered in the policy. There was limited attention to wellbeing needs, vulnerability, and the perception of the child about her/his safety concerns.	<p>The Service has already introduced the new;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Principles and Guidance for Prevention and Diversion (PaD) (Welsh Government)</i></li> <li>• <i>Case Management Standards for Prevention and Diversion (YJB)</i></li> </ul> <p>Practice will be fully embedded by May 2024.</p>	Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners	May 2024
b) There were no guidelines to support practitioners better to assess, analyse, and plan for work to keep children safe and protect others from harm.	The service will review and update the Risk and Vulnerability Policy to reflect the adoption of the new PaD documents and ensure staff are fully aware of how safeguard and manage risk of children subject to Out of Court Disposals.	Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners	July 2024

<p>c) The regional assessment tool was not providing sufficient detail to help practitioners gather and analyse the information they needed for effective assessments to keep children safe and protect others from harm.</p>	<p>New nationally mandated <i>Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool</i> adopted by the service on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.</p> <p>National Training not available until Sept-Oct 2024.</p> <p>All new cases</p> <p>In-house support and guidance provided by managers and senior staff who have experience with Asset+.</p> <p><b>The Operational Management Group will quality Assurance Audit.</b></p>	<p>Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners Members of the OMG (Audit)</p>	<p><b>Partly completed April 2024</b></p> <p>Oct-Nov 2024</p>
<p>d) There were no internal scrutiny processes or procedures to assure decision-making.</p>	<p>The service will reinstate Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service and Operational Managers</li> <li>• Chair of Magistrates Bench</li> <li>• Local Inspector (NWP)</li> </ul>	<p>Service and Operational Managers</p>	<p>Sept 2024</p>
<p>e) Arrangements, including social services and education staff representation at the Bureau, were not yet embedded.</p>	<p>Children's Services and Education representatives are part of the Out of Court Disposal Allocation and Review Panels (Bureau), however too early to evaluate their contribution and experience, the service will review these arrangements and consult with the OMG and NWP on changes or further developments.</p>	<p>Service manager</p>	<p>Oct 2024</p>
<p>f) Insufficient consideration had been given to the introduction of Outcome 22</p>	<p>North Wales Police and Regional YJS launched 'Second Chance' practice arrangements in March 2024. This practice</p>		

	<p>introduced the inclusion of Outcome 22 to the options for an Out of Court Disposal.</p> <p><b>The practice is early 'test' stage, the service will keep the OMG and SMB briefed on progress and issues, and continue to collaborate with the NWP (Prevention Hub) and the OPCC on development and roll-out.</b></p> <p>The service will provide some oversight and QA via the reinstatement of the OofCD Scrutiny Panel.</p>	Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners	Ongoing (partly dictated by regional planning and NWP Prevention Hub)
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## 6. Resettlement (Policy and Procedures)

### 6.1

Area for Improvement (Resettlement)	Action	Who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Insufficient attention was given to supporting practitioners in promoting children's safety and wellbeing (safeguarding) and risk of harm to others.</li> <li>b) Meeting the needs of actual and potential victims was not explicit in the policy.</li> <li>c) There was no mention of MAPPA in the policy.</li> <li>d) The recommended reading list had not been updated to include more current</li> </ul>	<p>The service will create a new Resettlement Practice Document, we will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek best practice within Wales.</li> <li>• Re-affirm with OMG Chair and Members of their responsibility to form a Resettlement Panel when required.</li> <li>• Consult with YJB Cymru on relevant reading and policy documentation.</li> </ul>	Service Manager Operational Managers and Senior Practitioners  Operational Management Group (Chair)	May 2024

information about diversity and other resettlement areas of practice. e) Insufficient attention was given to broader protected characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Diversity and Protected Characteristics are included in the document.</li> </ul>		
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## 7. Improvement Plan Journey

7.2 Approved by SMB Members and submitted to HMIP and YJB 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Feedback from HMIP and response by end of April 2024.

7.3 HMIP Improvement Plan paper to be presented at SMB meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024.

7.4 HMIP Improvement Plan to be presented at Council Cabinet Committees April 2024.

7.5 HMIP Improvement Plan will be incorporated into the Gwynedd and Mon Youth Justice Plan (2024-25) in June 2024. The Implementation of actions will be monitored at SMB (YJB in attendance) and OMG quarterly meetings.

## 8. Sign-off

Name Designation	Signature	Date
<b>Fôn Roberts</b> Chair of the Gwynedd Mon YJS Management Board.		08.04.2024
<b>Stephen Wood</b> Service manager Gwynedd Mon YJS.		