

Custody Youth Support Project

PSA targets for 2008 have now been established and the continuation of the existing Custody Young Person Project will clearly contribute to achieving a number of the targets, in particular the following are most relevant;

- *Delivery Agreement 14, Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success – indicators 3 and 5 relate to substance misuse and re-offending.*
- *Delivery Agreement 23, Make Communities Safer – Priority Action 2, 3 and 4. These relate to drug misusing offenders, tackling crime and disorder/ antisocial behaviour and reducing re-offending.*
- *Delivery Agreement 25, Reduce the harm caused by Alcohol and Drugs . This Agreement has wide ranging responsibilities but in particular **section 3.8** states that local areas will identify those young people at risk of failing to reach their potential because of substance misuse and provide tailored support for them (Targeted Youth Support).*

Introduction

We have the opportunity to inherit a viable and established young persons custody based support model that has tried and tested links to young people services within the Force area. This model presents a unique opportunity to engage with vulnerable young people at the earliest opportunity within the Criminal Justice System. Information obtained at this early stage is invaluable to partner agencies but it also highlights those young people that are not yet known to other services.

The scheme was originally conceived as a drugs project (see below) but it is currently aimed at all arrested young people. It is a high quality service that offers early intervention and support to children and young people in the custody setting thereby providing 'Targeted Support' to vulnerable young people that subsequently draws in other appropriate services. In addition to working with young people there is scope to offer support and advice to those parents who attend the custody suite, either to support their child at interview or merely to collect them on release from custody.

The Youth Matters Green Paper (2005) sets out a vision of an integrated youth support service helping all young people in England achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes through the coherent, young person-centred delivery of information, advice and guidance, support, development opportunities and positive activities. Targeted youth support is central to this.

Home Office Pilot Scheme

In November 2003 a Home Office funded pilot scheme was introduced into Middlesbrough custody suite that provided support to young people involved in substance misuse. (Albeit from the outset **all** young people arrested in Middlesbrough were targeted) This was one of ten pilot sites established to develop, evaluate and implement models of assessment at the point of arrest which are specifically tailored to the needs of young people.

In August 2004 drug testing of young people was included but this was subsequently discontinued in February 2007. Changes to Force custody arrangements in February 2007 resulted in young people from Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton being included and at that time the scheme was reconfigured to meet the increased demands.

The pilot project is no longer financially supported by the Home Office and funding will eventually run out in March 2008. As it stands the young persons service will cease operation at that point. In reality the service may well degenerate prior to this as staff look elsewhere for employment.

“Youngsters add a range of additional complications when in custody, the YP workers can often make life easier for both ourselves and the detainee when they are available”
A.S. Custody Sgt

Current service provision

The service has three members of staff, comprising a team leader and two project workers. They work rota system providing cover 7 days a week and where possible target peak arrest times.

Since Jan 2007, some 2232 young people have been detained. 749 have been engaged by Custody Youth Workers.

Of these, 537 have accepted full assessment with 422 being referred to other agencies for support. The real significance of these figures is the fact that over 70% of young people engaged participated in full assessment and of these, 78% agreed that further support would be of benefit to them.

The following facts highlight some of the unique benefits of this programme:

- Engagement is purely voluntary and thus more meaningful for the young person
- Young people clearly feel that this service is being offered in the right way at the right time
- Young people are being offered support, immediately in custody when they feel that they are able to talk through the reasons behind their arrest and the implications of aspects of their current lifestyle -including those beyond their control (e.g. family break ups)
- Young people are able to be supported when they are often in a very vulnerable state
- This is the only custody based young people's service in the North East.

The work falls broadly into two main categories listed as follows;

Prevention

- Make contact and update relevant key workers where appropriate
- Encourage and refer young people to access mainstream education/employment/training.
- Access to diversionary activities to encourage young people to use social time more appropriately
- Engage and educate/divert young people away from substance misuse
- Refer to substance misuse agency when substance misuse may be deemed problematic

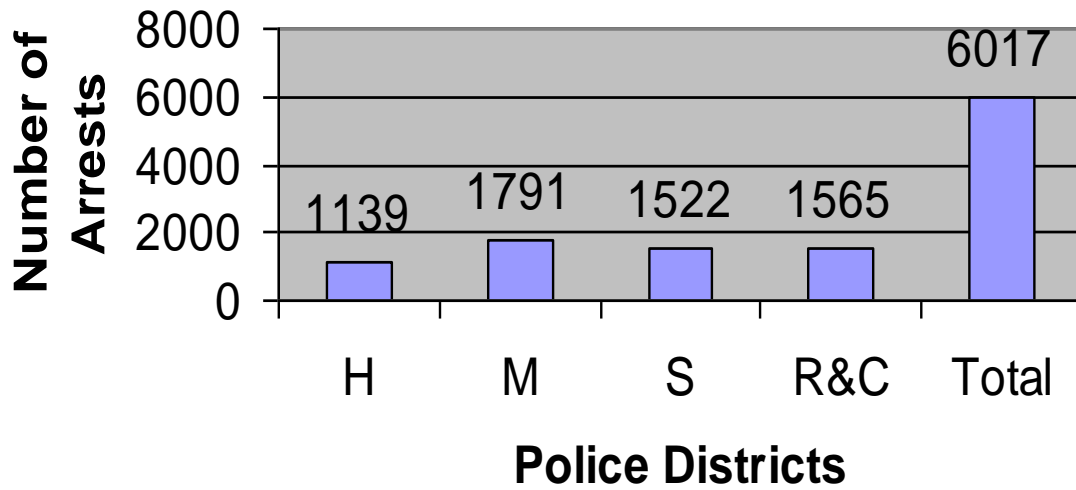
"So you can tell them your side and they will listen to you"

14 year old (YPAR survey 2007)

Early Intervention

- Educate and inform young people around the consequences of their criminal behaviour
- Encourage Re-direction of young people away from criminal activities
- Encourage self-reflection of behaviour, this enables the young person to understand how their behaviour can have a negative affect on others and society.

YP Arrests Nov 06 - Nov - 07



*Comparative costs

Cost to arrest a young person (in terms of police time and Facilities)

£1,000 per incident

Young person is charged and appears in court, (including the cost of prosecution and legal aid)

**£3,000
(Crown Court £6000)**

Young person is found guilty with community service disposal

£1,500

Per capita cost of young people supported by Custody Youth Support Project

£242

- benchmark figures Suffolk County Council

The service actively works across 3 Local Authorities - Middlesbrough, Stockton and Redcar& Cleveland. All three areas have the exact same referral routes in place, this ensures that all young people, regardless of their area of residence have the opportunity to access and receive the best possible intervention. Working links have been made between statutory services (Social Services, CAMHS, Youth Offending Teams, Connexions and Disc).

Whilst Hartlepool custody suite is undergoing refurbishment, all arrestees including young people resident in Hartlepool will be taken to the centralised custody suite. In preparation for this change, Custody Youth Workers are already establishing links and referral routes with Hartlepool services to ensure continuity of care for these young detainees.

In the current financial year the service is provided within a budget of £130,000. (only M8) A service with a manager and 4 workers able to cover the four L.A, areas would cost £180,000. Depending on service requirements and available funding, the costs could be adjusted within these figures.

Support for Parents/Carers

The great majority of parents/carers of young people under 17 who have been arrested will attend the custody suite to support their child during interview and to take them home. In practise, this can often mean long periods of waiting and worrying, not only about their child's welfare but also reflection on the implications of anti social and/or criminal behaviours and fears about the next steps in the criminal justice system.

Parents whose children are continually arrested are currently well supported by referral to a variety of agencies affording opportunities to help them to evaluate their parenting techniques.

However, there is no service that is capitalising on the opportunity to engage parents during those waiting times when their children are being processed through custody (both pre and post interview). For those parents who are unfamiliar with the justice system and/or who may be experiencing other difficulties with their children such as truanting, inappropriate peer groups, difficult behaviours within the home, a service in the custody suite will enable support to be offered and referrals made for parenting guidance at the earliest opportunity thus maximising the opportunity to halt a child's progress through the criminal justice system.

Action Required

In order for this service to continue post 31st March 2008 full funding would need to be secured. Resource allocation for Local Area Agreements and services in general for 2008 and beyond will be currently under discussion. This project needs to be promoted to partners and supported by representatives of Cleveland Police who are involved in the allocation of these resources.

Christine Davidson.

Youth Manager
Cleveland Police.

Insp. Kath Barber.

DIP/PPO Strategic Lead
Cleveland Police.