

Youth Justice: current performance and working with Community Safety Partnerships

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Current Arrangements

Focus on prevention

Collaborative approach with Kent Police to assess and support all young people involved in low level offending. The approach is informed by Police's national 'Child Centred Policing' strategy.

'Child first, offender second' so all young people who offend are offered support by Early Help.

Young people in Court

Fewer young people in Court, but higher levels of concern. Youth Justice experts assess and support these young people. Maintain focus on reducing harm to others, and all victims are offered the opportunity to be part of the plan.

Current Performance

Data

- Community Safety Partnership Youth Justice data for 2014 – 2018 is available.
- Measuring all substantive outcomes – Caution, Youth Conditional Caution, all Court outcomes

Headlines

- Lower numbers of First Time Entrants than England and Wales
- Lower levels of reoffending compared to England and Wales

What Works

Kent approach is modelled on latest research on the approaches that support a positive outcome for young people:

- Desistance – what factors support a shift away from offending
- ‘Beyond Youth Custody’ review into why outcomes for young people leaving custody have been poor
- Trauma-informed working

Desistance Theory

What Works – a practice spine that supports structural change alongside change within the individual

A **balanced, trusting and consistent working relationship** with at least one worker.

Meaningful personal relationships and a sense of belonging to family.

Emotional support, practical help and where the **worker clearly believed in the capacity of the child** or young person to desist from offending.

Access to **mainstream services** – education, training, employment, health

Changing peer and friendship groups.

Interventions which provided **problem solving solutions** to use in day-to-day life situations.

Well planned and relevant restorative justice interventions.

Beyond Youth Custody



THE ROLE OF ALL SERVICES: SUPPORTING THE SHIFT IN IDENTITY

NACRO. Dr Neal Hazel

Trauma – a definition

Trauma or Adolescent Childhood Experience (ACE)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are highly stressful, and potentially traumatic, events or situations that occur during childhood and/or adolescence

It can be a single event, or prolonged threats to, and breaches of, a young person's safety, security, trust or bodily integrity.

These experiences directly affect the young person and their environment, and require significant social, emotional, neurobiological, psychological or behavioural adaptation.

HOW DOES IT IMPACT THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

ACEs impact a child's development, their relationships with others, and increase the risk of engaging in health-harming behaviours, and experiencing poorer mental and physical health outcomes in adulthood. Compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ ACEs are:



2x

more likely to binge drink and have a poor diet



3x

more likely to be a current smoker



4x

more likely to have low levels of mental wellbeing & life satisfaction



5x

more likely to have had underage sex



6x

more likely to have an unplanned teenage pregnancy



7x

more likely to have been involved in violence



11x

more likely to have used illicit drugs



11x

more likely to have been incarcerated



Trauma-informed Services

Key aspects of service delivery

- Awareness. Staff understand impact of trauma, can identify trauma in the assessments carried out and can respond to young people who have experienced trauma *The first aim is to increase the actual and perceived safety of the young person. Without some stability and safety, the ability to focus on anything but immediate survival is limited.*
- Services are safe, flexible and responsive to need. People can access services in a way which meets their needs. *Trauma can teach young people to be suspicious of kindness, and sometimes 'acting out' is a way to test how adults respond.*
- Collaboration is key. Young people are actively involved in their planning and develop safety plans if things don't go well

Italics from: Trauma-informed youth justice, Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (2017)

Implications for Community Safety Partnerships

Trauma-informed workforce across whole Community Safety partnership.
Health funding secured to develop staff skills and a shared language around young people at risk of offending

An increased focus on building strong, positive relationships with professionals.

Developing strength-based projects and activities for young people involved in the criminal justice system. A move away from reparation towards building a new identity for the young person.

KCC developing teams around adolescent risk across Kent.

Adolescent Risk Taking

These are adolescents and adolescents take risks and make mistakes:-

- Their world is expanding and so risks will expand also
- Healthy adolescent development requires risk taking, so they can learn from their mistakes
- Allowing risk taking helps safeguard the Young Person

