

Briefing for Education Scrutiny Committee on attainment of young offenders

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform the Education Scrutiny Committee of the educational and skills attainment of young offenders.

Background

The Lancashire Youth Offending Team (LYOT) works with young people aged 10-17 years involved in the criminal justice system. Children and young people within the youth justice system are more likely to have a multiple characteristics that place them at risk of offending and reoffending. Currently, LYOT has a total of 435 young people open to them as current cases, 307 of these are of school age (10-16 years) and 128 over school age (17 years). The YOT has a primary role to advocate and broker access to ETE (Education, Training and Employment) both strategically and on behalf of individual young people. The YOT assess all young people using Asset Assessment. This is a structured assessment tool used by all Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales on all young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. It aims to look at the young person's offence or offences and identify a multitude of factors or circumstances which may have contributed to such behaviour.

There is a section in Asset on education training and employment that flags up educational underachievement. This assessment is completed by a YOT case manager often in consultation with a specialist YOT education worker or a seconded YPS worker. It draws on evidence from a number of sources including education records such as test/exam results, educational plans (in particular statements of education need and personal education plans for young people in the care of the local authority), school/college reports, records of achievement/progress files, interviews/discussion with young people, their parents/carers and other professionals such as teachers/tutors. The assessment would also include how many hours of ETE are arranged each week and is there evidence of non-attendance. Other non attendance may include ill-health, carers deciding to keep the young person away from school, lack of transport/poor accessibility, bullying in the school work workplace. Once all the factors have been evidenced the rate the extent to which the young person's education, training and employment is associated with the likelihood of further offending is considered using a rating of 0 – 4 (0 being no problems and 4 being severe problems). An example of a rating from 1-2 would be that offending may sometimes be linked to non-attendance, but not consistently. An example of a rating of 3 or 4 would be when most of his/her offending occurred when she/he is not attending school/college/training/employment. Following the

assessment an intervention plan is drawn with the young person and their parent/carer to translate the problems identified in Asset into realistic programmes of work. Practitioners will ensure that any intervention to address a young person's needs in relation to ETE takes into account the multiple needs associated with ethnicity, disability and any special education needs presented. The plan sets SMART (specific, measured, achievable, realistic, timebound) targets for the young person and identifies key personnel to help the young person achieve the targets.

Work being undertaken in LYOT to support attainment

YOT education and YPS workers are responsible for monitoring and coordinating training, education and support services for young offenders. They also link into schools, colleges and/or training providers and work with pupils to help prevent involvement with crime or exclusion from school, college or training. Their work with young people varies from case to case depending on circumstances and need. Examples of their activities includes:-

- regular meetings in schools, colleges & training providers sharing up to date information regarding offences, orders, interventions and assessments.
- Access the IMPULSE Education Database, to input details of involvement with YOT and to access education history/information to assist in YOT interventions
- Sharing information regarding young people who are assessed as high risk of harm of vulnerability and managing that risk in the school, colleges and training establishments.
- Informing schools, colleges & training providers when a young person is alleged to have committed a sexual offence and working with the Safeguarding Officer to manage risk
- Annual consultation with the chair of LASSH in reviewing YOT/Secondary School working agreement and getting this signed off with individual schools each year
- Provide YOT workers and report writers with up to date information from schools and education providers
- Ed Reps attend the ACERS/SEN Reintegration Panel Meetings providing information and highlighting young people known to our service within this forum.
- Securing ETE provision for young people being released from custody
- Sharing information with the secure estate via the ASCL protocol
- Promoting restorative approaches in schools as a means of resolving conflict
- Preparing young people for the reintegration into school, college or training providers and assessing factors contributing to the breakdown of initial provision
- Co-ordinating Volunteer Mentors - matching them to young people who need support

Identification of key challenges

Engaging young people known to LYOT in suitable ETE can be a challenge, however, participation in school and college and attainment of work-related skills are major protective factors in offending and reoffending. Children and young people within the youth justice system are more likely to have multiple and associated needs that place them at risk of offending and reoffending. LYOT practitioners are therefore mindful of the fact that the young people they supervise have characteristics which may include low self-esteem, behaviour or emotional problems, mental health difficulties, poor social skills which sometimes because of their presenting nature may have to take priority over addressing their ETE needs. They are also often very chaotic resulting in unstable accommodation, moving from area to area or being sanctioned to custodial sentences all of which can disrupt their ETE provision. ETE therefore cannot be viewed in isolation from other relevant matters in a young person's life.

Work also has to be sometimes undertaken with a parent/carer to encourage them to support the young person which again can prove challenging particularly when they themselves have a negative attitude towards ETE.

Providers can often show resistance to young people who have associated risk factors or a criminal record which requires a YOT practitioner to not only advocate on their behalf but assist the provider in putting an adequate risk assessment in place to manage presenting issues. Providers cannot always meet the needs of young people open to LYOT because of their presenting needs they do not often fit into their main stream full time provision which leaves LYOT practitioners struggling to find suitable provision.

Statistics

Following the discontinuation of nationally mandated ETE targets from the Youth Justice Board, LYOT has worked to create realistic and challenging ETE measures to inform the local management board and other relevant agencies. The emphasis is on 'distance travelled' while a young person is known to the YOT and maintenance of educational placement to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Local Performance Measures

Due to the demise of the 'old' national measure, Lancashire YOT has worked with our partners to develop a new measure for ETE. For all orders ending in the period, the new measure will compare:

- Start and end hours for ETE to determine whether there has been an improvement;

- Start and end ASSET score for ETE to determine whether there has been an improvement.

TARGET 1: Of all young people starting a YOT programme in EET, ensure that no more than 20% end their programmes as NEET.

TARGET 2: To target all NEET starting YOT programmes to achieve 10% in EET at the end of the programme (this in line with a national trends).

This measure will enable subtle improvements in attendance to be demonstrated together with improvements in ETE assessments scores. As it is a local measure however, it will not be possible to draw a direct comparison with other YOTs.



ETE Local
Measure 2012-20:

Current YOT performance in relation to the 2 NEET targets is extremely good. The YOT are currently exceeding target levels for:

- ensure that no more than 20% end their programmes as NEET;
- To target all NEET starting YOT programmes to achieve 10% in EET at the end of the programme.

Julie Cummins, Service Manager

Mukthar Master, Performance and Information Manager

Lancashire Youth Offending Team, 29 August 2013