
**PLACEMENT OF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE PREVENTIONS WORKER IN
HUMMERSKNOTT & SKERNE PARK SCHOOLS**

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members of the current placement of one Youth Offending Service (YOS) Preventions Officer serving Hummersknott and Skerne Park schools and to provide information on recent changes in relation to the cluster arrangements.

Summary

2. Members may be aware that Darlington YOS was allocated YJB Preventions funding for 2006/07 and 2007/08. This funding was supplemented by additional matched funding from the Extended Services Programme in order to develop targeted prevention services at Hummersknott and Skerne Park Primary with the placement of a YOS Prevention Officer. Full Funding has been secured from cluster arrangements until March 31st 2009

Information and Analysis

3. The development and delivery of targeted prevention services within Hummersknott and Skerne Park schools contributes to a number of complementary government initiatives (health, social care, education, social inclusion) but overall the programmes have been focused on preventing youth crime and anti-social behaviour and improving the quality of life of those young people at risk and their families and also for those who live in their communities. This targeted approach should also contribute to the PSA stretch target to reduce by 10% the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system by 2008-09.
4. The original key objectives of the YOS Preventions Officer placement :
 - (a) To reduce the number of first time entrants into the Criminal Justice System
 - (b) To improve assessment of risk and need of young people who are potential offenders
 - (c) To improve access to specialist and mainstream services.
 - (d) To work with young people who are at risk of permanent and fixed term exclusion
 - (e) To work with young people who may be, or are involved in substance misuse
 - (f) To work with families who are not engaging in the “school process”
 - (g) To work with year 6 pupils at Skerne Park Primary School to support them through transition to Hummersknott School
5. However, since the recent introduction of Children Services cluster arrangements, a cluster plan has been developed to build upon the work already being undertaken at Hummersknott and Skerne Park schools. These prevention arrangements now cover other Schools in that cluster i.e. Carmel, Heighington High Coniscliffe, Mowden Infants and Juniors, Abbey Federation, St Augustine’s and George Dent.
6. The YOS Preventions Officer provides similar interventions at the additional schools, however, as a consequence it is anticipated that the numbers of young people being referred and worked with, will be much lower than those previously from Hummersknott and Skerne Park. To further

enhance services to young people and their families attending these schools, a referral system has been introduced to ensure provision is needs led. The Prevention Officers time is dependent on engagement. If pupils and/or their families fail to engage, the support will have to be withdrawn.

7. The Head Teacher from Hummersknott School had reported that “there have been some clear benefits to the school and therefore the students, the Preventions Officer has brought a different dimension to work with young people. They themselves relate readily to him as someone who they can relate to and find helpful”. Some of the benefits include:-
 - (a) Rapid access to additional support, e.g. Substance Misuse, Sexual Health, CAMHS and anger management.
 - (b) Increased engagement from parents
 - (c) Meeting the needs of the most difficult children
 - (d) Access to information regarding students behaviors outside of school
 - (e) Development of projects that have improved transition and assistance in ensuring students settle well into the environment of a new large school; and
 - (f) Staff development within school

8. The main focus of the Preventions worker has been in supporting those young people at greatest risk of exclusion at the Yr 6/7 transitional stage of their education. The focus of this work has made a significant contribution in the reduction of year 7 students being subject to permanent and fixed rate exclusions as represented below.

Total of permanent and fixed rate exclusions for Yr 7 students over a 3 yr period are:-

05/06	06/07	08/09 to date
71	15	1

Activities undertaken to end January 2008

9. The delivery of group work and 1-1 interventions in both Skerne Park and Hummersknott schools, continues to utilise innovative and creative projects to engage young people and parents. During the period April –December 2007, seven young people have engaged in specifically targeted one to one interventions following a YOS ONSET risk assessment which is the Youth Justice tool to assess, plan and review individual needs. This is in addition to a daily average of 15 young people per session accessing the ‘Chill out Café’ at lunch times.

10. The focus of the extended services project group work has been to address low level anti social behaviour and issues that might lead to offending. Other partner agencies have contributed in the delivery of specialist areas i.e. weekly sexual health girls group and substance misuse drop in. The preventions worker has been supported by SWITCH Substance misuse team) in the delivery of a whole day workshop for year 11 students. Nine girls successfully completed a non gender stereotyping programme in partnership with S&D Training.

11. An affirmed partnership with Family Learning has lead to the facilitation and delivery of a “Lads and Dads” residential programme in which 10 boys and their fathers participated. A recent Ofsted in December 07 reported :-

“several courses and events have been designed collaboratively in response to several identified learning needs. For example, work with the Youth Offending Service led to the development of a

successful residential Lads & Dads incorporating climbing and outdoor activities. Further projects to encourage greater male participation in family learning are being developed”.

12. On-going projects include the development of a transitions programme for parents and young people, which will be delivered in conjunction with the parent liaison officer from Children Services Department and will target year 6 pupils at Skerne Park School commencing in March 2008.
13. Planning for the longer term a John O ‘Groats to Lands End Cycle ride is being organised supported by the Army. This project continues to attract funding and support from a variety of sources.

Conclusion

- 14 The current arrangements have had clear benefits for some children and young people. It is also acknowledged that there has been increased engagement from parents. The new cluster arrangement will provide the Preventions Officer with the opportunity to support the additional schools; however, the number of referrals will need careful monitoring to ensure that the quality of work is not compromised.
15. From 1st April 2008 the Prevention Officer will be funded through Cluster Funding arrangements.

Impact on Looked After Children

16. The engagement of the YOS Preventions worker with Looked After Children who require this provision, will provide benefits for those young people.

Recommendation

17. Members are asked to note the progress made within the current extended service.

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