

1. Investors in Volunteers / Investors in People

The YOS recently achieved the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard, recognising the team's excellent work with volunteers. Volunteers make a significant contribution to the work that is undertaken across the service. Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations involving volunteers. The standard aims to improve the quality of the volunteering experience for all volunteers and helps organisations to acknowledge the enormous contribution that they make. Investing in Volunteers is managed by the UK Volunteering Forum and is delivered by the National Council for Volunteering Organisations (NVCO).

The YOS was assessed against a range of best practice standards and proved to excel in all aspects of working with its volunteers. The volunteer team take a real pride in their work to recruit, support and offer regular training to the volunteer group and the quality standard underlines the consistency that is being maintained.

Volunteers with Leeds YOS take on a wide variety of roles, including: being appropriate adults supporting young people in a police station setting; community panel members who are working to plan and support with young people and victims with first time court orders; mentors and; reparation supervisors who support young people who complete positive tasks within their communities.

In addition the YOS currently holds the Investors in People award and has maintained this status over a 10 year period, being one of the few YOTs nationally to hold the status in its own right. The award is now due for renewal and the YOS is being re-assessed in June to ascertain whether we have maintained clear standards around service planning, workforce development and communication with and care of staff.

The dates for the IIP assessment are 18/19/20 June and Mark Atherton has been asked to facilitate the process within the service alongside the lead assessor Bob Moffatt. The central part of the assessment involves interviews with staff, managers and volunteers from a cross section of the service

2. National Standards

New National Standards for Youth Justice Services came into effect on 2 April 2013. The standards, set by the Secretary of State for Justice on advice from the Youth Justice Board, are designed to ensure public protection, safeguard young people and deliver effective services.

The recent revisions to the standards were necessary to assist the introduction of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012 and the introduction of AssetPlus, the new assessment, planning and interventions framework, due to replace the current system (Asset) next year.

The standards have also been streamlined and reduced in number and aim to remove or reduce prescription over the delivery of community-based youth justice services, allowing for greater application of professional judgement by front line staff.

The new standards introduce for the first time a series of strategic management standards, gathering in one section all the expectations for the strategic management and governance of youth justice services.

This is further divided into 3 categories:

- generic standards (which apply to all such management and governance activities);
- community specific standards; and
- custody specific standards. (there are 3 that apply specifically to the secure estate)

I thought it would be appropriate to draw the attention of the YOS partnership to the 14 new strategic standards as these are there key areas of responsibility for YOS partnerships:

Generic

Strategic standard 1: Ensure that all young people who enter the youth justice system in the local area or establishment are allocated an appropriately trained supervising worker.

Strategic standard 2: Ensure that all service provision takes full account of diversity and equal opportunities (ensuring access to appropriate services and programmes).

Strategic standard 3: Ensure a focus on the child within the family context throughout the youth justice system

Strategic standard 4: Ensure that commissioning practice is based on the available evidence.

Strategic standard 5: Ensure that all interventions which are delivered address the risks and needs of the individual

Strategic standard 6: Ensure that a workforce development strategy and training plan are in place to ensure high-quality personnel and service delivery.

Strategic standard 7: Ensure quality-assurance processes are in place, built on feedback from key stakeholders including courts, victims, young people and parents and carers.

Strategic standard 8: Ensure supervision and appraisal systems are in place which ensure continual improvement and development of staff skills.

Strategic standard 9: Ensure systems are in place for identification and generation of management information (including passing this securely to the YJB).

Strategic standard 10: Put in place systems that ensure that management information is used for strategic planning and service development, and is passed securely to partners where necessary and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Strategic standard 11: Establish and implement clear local policies and protocols in relation to:

- public protection and risk management (including release and recall arrangements for young people on licence/supervision)
- safeguarding and child protection which should take account of any existing local authority policies and thresholds
- enforcement and compliance with court orders, remand and bail programmes, including responsibilities for undertaking enforcement action where case management sits outside the youth offending team (YOT)
- acceptable behaviour in relation to staff and children and young people
- a complaints procedure which gathers feedback from all parties including young people and parents/carers
- joint working arrangements, roles and responsibilities between individual secure establishments, YOTs, and all other partners
- escalation procedures and mechanisms for resolving disputes and ensuring accountability, in particular where agreed joint working arrangements are not adhered to
- management and reporting (where relevant) of self-harm, suicide attempts and serious incidents in line with YJB expectations (outlined here www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice/monitoring-performance/serious-incidents)
- escorting young people from custody to community, and the transition of young people between youth justice services and from the youth to the adult criminal justice system

(drawing on the Youth to Adult Transitions Framework for community transfers and relevant NOMS custody transitions guidance)

- delivery of services to victims in compliance with sections 9 and 11 of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (for community and custody respectively)
- delivery of restorative interventions in line with the Restorative Justice Council's National Occupational Standards and Best Practice Guidance for Restorative Practice.

Community

Strategic standard 12: In accordance with section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ensure that the work of the YOT is defined in a publicly accessible youth justice plan that is co-ordinated with other local plans.

Strategic standard 13: Ensure that the youth justice partnership is properly represented on a fully constituted management board or other local governance boards.

Strategic standard 14: Ensure that a local policy/protocol is in place which outlines the provision of an Appropriate Adult service (as required by section 38 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) in line with the National Appropriate Adult Network's National Standards.

To ensure that this policy makes provision within and outside office hours, and for young people who may be interviewed under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) while remanded or sentenced in custody whether within or outside the local authority area.

The full national Standards can be found here:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/youth-justice/national-standards-trial/national-standard-services.pdf>

3. Appropriate adults

On 25 April 2013, the High Court ruled that the current treatment of 17 year-olds in police custody, as determined by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), is unlawful. The ruling followed a judicial review brought against the Home Office and the Metropolitan Police on behalf of a young man detained by police in London on suspicion of robbery.

His lawyers argued that the police's refusal to notify his family of his whereabouts and failure to offer him an Appropriate Adult were in breach of the Human Rights Act and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC).

The Home Office has announced that they do not intend to appeal against the ruling, and will be considering carefully how to bring about the required changes to PACE Code C, which currently outlines how 17-year-olds are treated in police custody. Any changes to the PACE Codes or to PACE itself require a period of consultation, and will need to be laid before parliament.

The Association of Chief Police Officers has written to all forces advising that they should offer Appropriate Adults to 17-year-olds. West Yorkshire Police have indicated that they will be offering this service to 17 year olds and the YOS will be providing the volunteers accordingly.

In addition the YOS has reached an agreement in relation to the provision of an Appropriate Adult service to adults thought to be mentally disordered and otherwise vulnerable who are detained in West Yorkshire Police Force custody within Leeds. This will be provided in the form of a 6 month trial facilitated by the YOS through joint commissioning from West Yorkshire Police and Leeds Adult Social Care to provide suitably trained volunteers to respond and attend as Appropriate Adults for persons detained in any of the police stations within the Leeds area.

For routine Appropriate Adult call outs the hours of operation will be 8am to 10pm with the anticipated last call being no later than 9pm. This is to enable interviews to be completed before 10pm where possible. However, there will be occasions when calls do extend beyond this time and it will be at the discretion of the Custody Sergeant and Appropriate Adult to jointly negotiate this.

In cases of serious crime, and where it is more appropriate for a trained and qualified professional to act as an Appropriate Adult, this will be screened by the relevant ASC or LYPFT team before passing over to the AA co-ordinator at YOS.

Funding for the initial six month pilot will be a joint initiative between West Yorkshire Police and Leeds Adult Social Care. Based on an estimation of 150 referrals per annum (using recent referral data). The initial cost of the volunteer Appropriate Adult service will be £4500. West Yorkshire Police and Adult Social Care are contributing 50/50 of the costs.

4. Referral Orders

The YOS is planning some changes to the way that we deliver Referral Orders and recruiting some dedicated semi specialist staff to deliver this work. The rationale for developing a more consistent approach to YOS staff supporting panels is as follows:

- a) Having fewer YOS staff providing support to panels ensures a better knowledge/skills base and commitment to core principles within panels. Stronger relationships can develop with volunteers, VLO's, programmes team and reparation coordinator and also links to case managers whose work is being represented in the panel meetings
- b) Referral orders make up just over a third of new orders that are allocated within the service
- c) The Referral Order is the only order that has a truly 'public face' in the shape of victims and volunteer panel members and we need to ensure that our practice is strong and clear
- d) The Referral Order is a working example of our Restorative Practice and provides the opportunity for the Service to demonstrate its commitment to the core principles in contribution to the 'Restorative city'
- e) More opportunities to demonstrate best practice within panels will allow the courts to be more confident in using the new LASPO provision (2nd, 3rd RO's can be imposed as appropriate)

Alongside this change we are introducing a new quality assurance programme for panels in order to support good practice and to identify development needs for staff and volunteers. This will involve the regular observation of panels including volunteers and specialist staff. The QA process will cover the following key areas:

- Panel reports produced in good time to volunteers to assist preparation
- Pre-panel time scheduled prior to the meeting involving volunteers, YOS worker and VLO
- Clear introductions at beginning of panels including a with a welcome, scene setting - how the meeting will run, clarity about what info has been shared (e.g. report- which the family should have seen) and boundaries expected (e.g.-listening, everyone has a voice, etc.)
- How challenging behaviour or unexpected events e.g. parent turning up without notice are managed,
- Clear expectations given about likely outcomes from the meeting e.g. that the conversation/discussion will lead to a contract being written
- How the young person is included in the conversation and how their feelings about expectations are managed e.g. angry about idea of re-engagement in school
- How the victim is introduced and ensuring they are asked to leave when final plans for the young person are agreed
- How well the meeting is summarised ensuring clear actions about the next steps

Other developments:

- Developing clearer links with the YOS Reparation Coordinator, to ensure better local planning/delivery/accountability for reparation
- PSR authors to ensure discussion with the coordinator about their proposal prior sentence, making sure of suitability/availability of a specific programme
- Ensure consistent use of referral systems and recording completed hours on ChildView---so that reparation hours can be tracked accurately

- Facilitator training Sept 2013 onwards for new semi specialist staff and volunteers
- Stronger gatekeeping of RO reports to support the panel 'conversation' and empower panel members
- VLOs receiving victim information on the day following sentence - earlier assessment with victims and YOS case manager

Andy Peadar
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