

## **Lewisham Functional Family Therapy – Case Study (Thomas Sexton strand)**

### **Description:**

Functional Family Therapy in Lewisham Youth Offending Service is an in-house service that is offered to young people aged 11-17 years of age. The specialised staff all have extensive experience of working with young people and families involved in the criminal justice system. The staff that deliver FFT at Lewisham YOS are all seconded from the YOS.

The work that is undertaken by the specialised staff is aimed at understanding how relationships between family members function and supporting those elements that are positive or changing those that are negative. The sessions are generally weekly and in the homes of the young people. Contact is expected to last between 3 and 6 months, this is due to the intensity of the contact.

Young people need to meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for referral; they must be at risk or currently engaged in offending behaviour. There should also be evidence of challenging behaviour at home and/or school. Young people are expected to be living with their parents/carers. Once the young person has been referred, a team member from the FFT team is allocated and makes contact with the young person and parents/carers. An initial assessment is undertaken, and a plan is agreed.

Following sessions with the family, the specialist worker inputs data on the FFT Clinical Feedback System, which allows for data analysis and tracking of trackers.

### **Implementing the practice**

Lewisham YOS started implementing FFT as a partnership between the YOS and CAMHS, however the partnership was discontinued after under two years and FFT was brought in house to the YOS. The team that run FFT are practitioners who have all worked within the YOS and who also have experience of working with children and families with chronic emotional and behaviour problems. The referrals come from a variety of agreed sources; two local Pupil Referral Units, four mainstream schools, YOS and Children Social Care.

Those staff that wish to refer the young people/families complete a referral form that is emailed to the FFT team, who then discuss the referral and complete an initial assessment. Once the referral is accepted, the FFT team provide an allocated officer to the case, however the team works the case together in a way that is similar to systemic practice.

Lewisham FFT team have regular skype and email contact with Dr Thomas Sexton and partners to ensure that staff receive appropriate support for themselves and their cases.