

# DIVERT >

## Case Study



### About DIVERT Youth:

DIVERT is an innovative diversion programme helping children in Lancashire who come in contact with the Youth Justice System. Working in partnership with the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network, New Era Foundation DIVERT provides support to children via trained DIVERT workers.

Within Lancashire there is an existing DIVERT 18–25 offer to support young people who are transitioning to adult services. However, DIVERT has now extended the services they are able to provide. There are now dedicated DIVERT Youth coaches in nine community football trusts across the county (Accrington Stanley, AFC Fylde, Blackburn Rovers, Blackpool FC, Burnley FC, Fleetwood Town, Morecambe FC and Preston North End and Wigan Athletic) who are able to work with children up to the age of 17.

We have worked together to define referral pathways from Lancashire Constabulary and CYJS to DIVERT Youth and now have two distinct routes:

1. DIVERT Youth as a true diversion pathway for children who receive an outcome from police but it is deemed that a community based offer is more suitable.
2. To provide continued support in children's 'Moving On' plans after working with Lancashire CYJS.

To ensure that the needs of our cohort are met we have completed several training sessions with the coaches covering a variety of topics such as an Introduction to Child and Youth Justice, Child-First and Trauma informed practice.

Support is varied—such as mentoring, facilitating access to appropriate services/community/trust activities and opportunities for education, training and employment. A key feature of the DIVERT programme is support not being time limited; they have the capacity to work with children as long as is required to support the child to be diverted out of the criminal justice system and stay out.

# A child referred to DIVERT Youth:

A big thankyou to Alex, DIVERT Youth Mentor – Wigan Athletic Football Community Trust for sharing.

Child referred from Lancashire CYJS Police Officer following admitting an offence to the police. The outcome was CR Diversion – noting referral to DIVERT Youth as the diversion.

From initial assessment had explained how they can be easily led by peers and find it hard to control emotions. Aim in initial meetings was to find out young person's interests and hobbies. Important to find activities that may not be able to be facilitated by care home and people close to the young person.

Initially, it was important to find a "quick win" which will encourage conversation with young person and build trust with what we are offering. The initial assessment had led to the young person speaking about their enjoyment of cooking, to which we had offered to support them with a cooking session. This would give ownership to the young person around the session as they decided they wanted to make shortbread. Time/date was decided by the young person to show we are prepared to work around them and provided all ingredients for the session. Additionally, I took on weekly welfare checks to the home to see how the young person was progressing and discuss further session plans. The young person has a great passion for scootering, to which we facilitated travel, food and sessions in local skate parks. Important also was to help give new opportunities and try new exciting activities which they have not done before, all to encourage the young person out of their shell. Rock climbing and assault courses being some activities we enabled.

Working 1-2-1 with the young person on the weekly sessions allowed me to address why they get easily led by peers and for what reason they feel the need to appease other young people. Furthermore, we had discussions around controlling their emotions and what ways we can help if they feel agitated in any way. Having this 1-2-1 support seemed to help considerably as it was a safe place for them to show their emotions.

Recently we have moved away from 1-2-1 sessions and into small group work, where this may be seen as a challenge it has not presented itself this way. The young person has remained focused on session and is enjoying having others present. This would be seen as a clear development in attitude towards other young people.

The young person has shown a clear commitment to trying new things and has been creative with ideas put forward to the programme. After speaking with guardians, they are pleased with the progression the young person is making while on the sessions.

The long-term goals have been set around providing long term education in school, at present the young person is currently receiving tuition at home and is being supported by his Divert mentor to return to a classroom setting. Long term, I would look at building a strong and positive link with the local schools which will help support the young person back into full time education. Working in partnership to provide a more suitable education which may consist of some off timetable work with myself.

As of this moment the young person is still highly motivated and engaged in sessions, within the small amount of time I have worked with them they have shown no signs of negative behaviour towards me or members of the community.