



Early Intervention in Police Custody

Scoping and Implementation

Pilot

Two practitioners working out of Wymondham Police Investigation Centre (PIC) .The workers are at the PIC Monday to Friday 10-7 and Saturday on call until 12. Funded until March 2023.

2 posts jointly funded by Norfolk Constabulary and Public Health through project Adder.

- ❖ Practitioners attempt to engage any child aged 10 - 17 who are arrested and taken to Wymondham PIC.
- ❖ Practitioners will advocate and coordinate/liaise with agencies that are involved or need to be involved, either within Norfolk or out of county local authorities.
- ❖ Where children are not open to services in the greater Norwich area, staff will offer subsequent community support and intervention for the child and their family.



Identifying need and obtaining support

- ❖ Mapping and understanding of current processes within each agency/organisation around a child's arrest –how each agency responds and how they/do not interconnect.

Norfolk partners :

- Police Custody
- Integrated front door Multi-Agency Service Hub
- Missing, Adult Sex Work, Slavery and Trafficking (police)
- Children's services various teams
- Youth Justice Service, including Court Team.
- Liaison and Diversion
- Appropriate Adult providers
- St Giles Rescue and Response

- ❖ Buy in at a senior level from Police, Children's Services and Youth Justice Service.
- ❖ Analysis of children arrested data provided by Police- is the service needed? If so where, when are the busiest times?
- ❖ Number of out of county children arrested and current responses
- ❖ What resource is needed, based on data analysis, to offer a service.
- ❖ Identifying potential gaps from mapping/serious case review child C
- ❖ Identifying funding/redirecting existing resources, including management oversight and business support



Approach

- ❖ 'Reachable moment' and child first are the guiding principles.
- ❖ Clear remit of staff roles - safety, wellbeing & child focus.
- ❖ Being a voluntary, non statutory service (key principle to effectively engaging children and negates the power imbalance exploited children experience).
- ❖ Practitioners do not complete formal assessments with children in custody.
- ❖ Engagement and support is guided by the child.
- ❖ Add to existing services/process in custody, not instead of.
- ❖ Supporting co-ordinated responses- including Multi-Agency and involvement of parents/carers, including out of county children.
- ❖ Reducing time between identified concern/s and support being offered.
- ❖ Mechanism to establish feedback from children, parents/carers and professionals, assisting development.



Norfolk Pilot Targets

- ❖ Engage 100 children in the custody suite in the first year
- ❖ 50 children offered a community service
- ❖ Reducing the critical time between arrest of a child and an intervention being offered, for those children not already open to a service.
- ❖ Positive feedback from children and their families/carers.
- ❖ Increased opportunities to engage children- 'reachable moment'
- ❖ Improved information sharing and safeguarding responses



Enablers

- ❖ Practitioners having access to Norfolk Children Services and YJS records- reduces children having to retell their 'story'.
- ❖ Office based at PIC with access to come and go.
- ❖ Culturally competent staff- both in terms of engagement with children and understanding of the safeguarding system and criminal justice system.
- ❖ Clear operating procedures.
- ❖ Designated custody sergeant SPOC to drive operational embedment within the Police.
- ❖ Clear communication- written, video and briefings delivered across the system to various agencies at an operational and senior level (see identifying need).
- ❖ Individual briefing with each custody team.
- ❖ Practitioners proactively developing professional relationships with those working in custody.
- ❖ Working in the PIC has enabled us to identify further gaps/areas of improvement between agencies when a child is arrested.



Initial findings: 1st three months

- ❖ 96% of children in custody engaged with practitioners, higher than anticipated.
- ❖ Challenged and prevented poor safeguarding responses, such as wanting to give a child a train ticket to get home, when residing out of county.
- ❖ Positive feedback from children, parents/carer and professionals.
- ❖ Our operating hours are, the majority of the time, meeting the need.
- ❖ Children that meet the project set criteria for community support is lower than expected, however, we have adapted a flexible approach.
- ❖ Safeguarding and wellbeing concerns are being shared with professionals in real time.
- ❖ Not having access to Athena (Norfolk Police case management system) places additional work on detention staff (in the process of gaining access).
- ❖ Positive relationship and early contact with Rescue and Response has improved repatriating London children to their home borough.
- ❖ Work completed in custody has saved time for other professionals which results in better/faster responses for children.



Feedback

"Nothing but positive feedback from us, they have both been fantastic, super helpful and I have no doubt have saved us hours of time. Its been great to have a direct contact so information is being shared quickly to support the young people"

Targeted Youth Support Service manager

"[worker] was really good. She was the only one who communicated to me what was going on with my son, as the police told me nothing. It was really helpful her being there, otherwise I would have had no idea"

Parent's feedback

"It was nice the way [worker] woke me in a polite way and was kind. You don't normally get someone there who is actually willing to help you. even the police were really trying to help me"

Child's feedback

"Workers are proactive in making contact with the social work team at the earliest opportunity"

Workers are young person focused and fully understand the risks

Workers are able to build relationships with young people and offer support when they really need it

The social work team knows who to contact if we need any support during and after

We understand more about the young people who have been supported e.g. their mental health needs

I have not had one yet but previously when there has been a strat for a young person from another locality these are difficult to manage so having custody workers who can support the young person and make arrangements will be amazing I can't think of areas of improvement apart from the role to remain in place in the long term".

Children's Services Team manager

