

Case Reviews driving culture and practice developments

Using storyboards to support qualitative data collection

Essex

Key points:

- **The purpose of the multiagency workshop was to examine practice before, during and after a young person's detention, and to identify practice that would have increased the chances of a more positive outcome for BT.**
- **To achieve this, the group considered care planning and placement issues alongside educational issues.**

This storyboard is based on and is specific to children and young people detained in custody and are in care under s.31 of the CA 89 and have a statutory plan in place to support their learning needs, either as a Statutory Statement of Educational Need (SSEN) or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). However, this also applies to young people who have an SSEN or an EHC Plan and are remanded to youth detention accommodation (YDA) and therefore become looked after under s.21 of the CA 89.

The documentation is reproduced in its entirety to illustrate both process and outcomes.

What are the key facts?

BT was sentenced to a 6 month Detention and Training Order (DTO) to serve 3 months of his sentence detained in custody followed by 3 months in the community on a DTO licence from the prison. At the point of sentencing, BT

- was in year 11 at an Independent Special School
- was subject to a full care order (s.31) and
- had Statutory Statement of Educational Need (SSEN) to support learning needs
- had been placed at a residential unit in Hertfordshire

On the day BT was sentenced, a new request was made to the Access to Resources Team (ART) to initiate a new search for a residential care placement.

On release on DTO Licence, BT was placed at a residential care home setting in Cheshire, funded by Essex Social Care.

What was the issue?

Ultimately, it can be said that BT's resettlement was not successful. He narrowly missed breaching the conditions of his licence and being recalled to custody. In the 7 weeks from his release to the point BT began to attend education BT absconded several times back to Essex. At the end of his licence period he returned to live with his father in Essex from where he had originally been removed and against the advice of Children's Social Care.

Key issues

Lack of joint planning. Unclear as to the reason for 2nd Access to Resources Team (ART) referral. Joint planning between Social Care, ART and SAS was not evident once the second ART referral had been made. SAS and EPS link with Social Care via Employability and Skills Unit and Children with Disabilities (CWD), not through Family Operations, therefore:

- a. CiC cases are not presented at the SEN Complex Case Forum, but are presented at the Social Care quadrant panels. SAS only attend the Social Care quadrant panels when a relevant case is being presented. It is not clear if this was the case for BT.
- b. Externally Commissioned Placements within Family Operations was not consulted by ART in commissioning BT's placement in Cheshire.
- c. There was no communication between SAS and Externally Commissioned Placements
- d. The placement was funded fully by Essex Social Care.

Missed planning opportunities. BT's sentence followed a period of 5 weeks (28 working days) where BT failed to attend court and a warrant without bail was issued. Although not missing, there followed three further court hearings before BT was sentenced. There is a clear missed opportunity for better planning to have taken place between Social Care, SAS and EPS and YOS.

Inability to source a suitable placement in time to prepare BT fully for his release and resettlement. ART considered up to 50 placements before a suitable one was confirmed in Stockport but without suitable education agreed or arranged.

BT's mental health needs could have been met through a therapeutic placement. This indicates that BT's case could have been presented at Joint Area Panel (JAP – health, social care and education resources panels), but was not.

Lack of communication. While BT was being detained, there was no follow up to the meeting held in the community in June 2015 and no further attendance at custodial reviews by any LA education representative, although SSEP shared the draft EHC Plan in July 2016. The SW, SSEP and the YOT case

manager absences limited communication. This led to the L&AC Senior Support Worker to support BT and professionals in lieu of a social worker.

Records not shared between services. The Virtual School holds a useful record of events and challenges, but this is not shared, and information between services was often inconsistent.

Unrealistic expectations on BT. BT only had nine days to prepare himself for his placement in the North West. Clearly, effective resettlement for BT would have meant a much clearer, established plan for his release at a much earlier stage of his detainment.

Lack of available education and training on release through the accommodation provider during the summer holidays. It is clear that the training provider could not commit to a full provision of education or training to be available to BT on his release, although there was a commitment to 1 to 1 provision through August into September of 2015.

Our journey so far....

YOS gathered and collated information from all professionals involved and held a multi-agency workshop on 11.03.16 The purpose was to examine practice before, during and after BT's detainment, and to identify practice that would have increased the chances of a more positive outcome for BT. To achieve this, the group considered care planning and placement issues alongside educational issues.

What are we doing?

Recommendations from the audit workshop:

Much tighter multi-agency planning is needed for young people at risk of receiving custody (remand or sentence) to prepare for detainment and resettlement at the pre-sentence stage as a multi-agency meeting:

1. This purpose of the meeting should be

- a. to inform all aspects of planning during a custodial episode and resettlement post release
- b. to identify key escalation routes where decisions are not carried through or cannot be made
- c. to effect better outcomes in terms of appropriate education and in terms of suitable care placements

2. The chair person should be either

- a. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for s.20 or s.31
 - b. Child in Need Reviewing Officer (CINRO) for s.17
 - c. YOS Internal Reviewing Officer if not known to social care
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3. A 'Decision Sheet' should be agreed by the end of the meeting, held by the chair (i.e. IRO, CiNRO etc) and circulated to key professionals and agencies ahead of custodial review meetings to track and drive actions by individual agencies and escalation of issues where necessary

4. The key professionals and agencies that should attend this meeting are

The IRO or CiNRO, the Social Worker, the Statutory Assessment Locality Case Manager, the Educational Psychologist, the YOS Case Manager, Externally Commissioned Placements representative, Access to Resources Team representative, the young person's current care/accommodation and education providers, Parents/carers and young people where appropriate

5. The benefits of convening such a meeting are that the resettlement planning through custody and on release back to the community becomes much tighter throughout the custodial episode because

- IROs / CiNCROs ensure oversight of planning, decision-making and the follow-up of actions and escalation
- communications issues mitigated, enabling greater collaboration between education, social care and YOS
- an appropriate placement is sourced in sufficient time to make appropriate education arrangements
- YOS makes better use of ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) to facilitate a young person's preparation for release
- the young person and parents / carers have the best opportunity to prepare for such a placement
- the placement – care and education – are able to plan effectively for the young person's release
- statutory agencies better support young people and care/accommodation and education providers
- the outcomes for the young person are improved – educationally and socially
- the young person is likely to reduce recidivism

What difference has this made? These recommendations are to be discussed at the Children's Partnership Board on 14th July 2016.

Areas for further action: Jethro Bogdanov to arrange second and third audit exercises for children and young people in custody and with and without EHC Plans and who subject to care orders and who are not subject to care orders.

Next Steps: Tanya Gillett (YOS HoS) to take to Jenny Boyd, DLD in West, who chairs the Children in Care Partnership for further consideration on 14th July 2016. Jethro Bogdanov to approach other LAs to establish what planning processes are in place.

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