

## YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS, CO-LOCATION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

### Key points:

- There is a palpable sense of cross-team multi-agency working in Greenwich, with YOS, SEN, Education and other teams all co-located on the same floor in the Council Offices
- This leads to a join-up in operational and strategic provision that attempts to move away from reactive ‘servicing’ of needs towards proactive deployment and support
- The disabling factors when special educational needs collide with structural (social) disadvantage and mental/physical health and welfare issues are understood, and this is illustrated by the work of the Fair Access Panel, which has an extended evolved remit well-beyond simply playing a role in the managed moves of children and young people displaying challenging behaviours
- An illustration of this proactive attitude is the work undertaken by the YOT to analyse “life course” patterns of children known to the service: for example, primary exclusion and attendance data correlates extremely well with later emergence into the youth justice system
- This is leading to a realisation that primary schools need to adopt a more holistic approach to behaviour management, looking beyond “poor behaviour” to deal directly with the reasons for it (“What does ‘early help’ actually mean?”)

### Powerful Multiagency Partnership Working in Greenwich: Proactive work to reduce the numbers of young people entering the Youth Justice System

Visitors to the Cutty Sark and the Royal Observatory may get a false impression of Greenwich the Borough. A visit to the high-rise tenement buildings around Woolwich town centre reveals a different social pattern. The deprived multicultural communities fall into the lowest categories across all London Boroughs in terms of worklessness and post-19 education outcomes<sup>1</sup>.

There is a palpable sense of cross-team multi-agency working in Greenwich, with YOS, SEN, Education and other teams all co-located on the same floor in the Council Offices. The YOT is “enmeshed” within Children’s Services, with good relationships with between service teams and schools. Although the national academisation programme is beginning to change the dynamics, the situation for the moment remains positive. One of the supporting factors is a bold decision by Greenwich Children’s Services to offer the same CAMHS, Ed Psych and SaLT provision to Academies as LA schools.

Colocation moves beyond the physical sharing of space, leading to a join-up in operational and strategic provision that attempts to move away from reactive ‘servicing’ of needs towards proactive deployment and support. This is illustrated by the work of the Fair Access Panel, which has an

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/key-facts/overview-of-london-boroughs/>

extended evolved remit well-beyond simply playing a role in the managed moves of children and young people displaying challenging behaviours.

The disabling factors when special educational needs collide with structural (social) disadvantage and mental/physical health and welfare issues are understood, and the Fair Access Panel, which meets every two weeks (term time only) with an extended membership that includes Educational Psychologist representation, , social services, school nurse services, “Families First” and SEND LA Managers, regularly discuss cases “at risk of permanent exclusion” (rather than dealing only with permanent exclusions), the reintroduction of children and young people into mainstream after placements in PRUs or Alternative Provision, unaccompanied minors, those in respite, Looked After Children, etc.

Another illustration of this proactive attitude is the work undertaken by the YOT to analyse “life course” patterns of children known to the service: for example, primary exclusion and attendance data correlates extremely well with later emergence into the youth justice system. By analysing the “Impulse” MIS that holds historic data, it confirmed very high rates of fixed term exclusion from primary school as one of the common features of young people who later came into contact with the Youth Justice Service (an *average* of 32 days across the cases studied).

This is leading to a realisation that primary schools need to adopt a more holistic approach to behaviour management, looking beyond “poor behaviour” to deal directly with the reasons for it (“What does “early help” actually mean?”). The Virtual School Headteacher already offers training on “attachment” to primary schools, but there is a realisation that more needs to be done to reduce the numbers of exclusions for verbal and physical threatening behaviour and assault by understanding the *reasons* behind the behaviours.

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