

# **Nottingham Youth Offending Team**

## **Assessment and Early Intervention Panel Report**

### **January 2013 – December 2013**

This report has been written to highlight the workings and achievements of the Assessment and Early Intervention Panel (AEIP) from January 2013 to December 2013.

#### **Aim of the Assessment and Early Intervention Panel**

The aim of the AEIP is to ensure that children and young people whose sexual behaviour is abusive or aggressive are responded to in a way that meets their needs, considers any risks posed towards them, and the risks they themselves pose to others.

#### **Objectives**

To ensure that all children and young people arrested or referred to the Police, Youth Offending Team (YOT), or Children's Services for sexually abusive/offending behaviour are consistently assessed.

To identify as early as possible those cases where intervention and treatment would be beneficial in preventing the development of a pattern of further offending/abusive behaviour and to give advice on appropriate interventions.

To ensure that victims' needs are identified and appropriate services offered.

To offer advice, where appropriate, to agencies regarding diversion from court.

To provide a consistent and coherent multi-agency approach which can be monitored and evaluated.

#### **Mandate**

The Mandate was derived from a multi-agency Task and Delivery Group (previously the Steering Group) which was chaired by a Safeguarding Board Officer including YOT (chair), Children's Social Care, Education, Police and C.A.M.H.S. However this has not taken place for some time.

## **Statistical Analysis of cases in which the Panel was involved**

During the period of January 2013 to December 2013, the YOT became aware of 24 young people who were either arrested for a sexual offence or were brought to our attention via Social Care or the police. Of these, 16 were considered at panel, 7 were not taken to panel following a management decision (in 3 cases all agencies were already involved, 1 had moved to the county and referrals were made to MASH, 1 case had been refused charge before the panel date, 1 case a full core assessment had already been identified and in 1 case we are still awaiting the Social Workers response) , 1 case did not attend the panel due to the Social Worker not attending to present the case. Of the 24 youngsters, 22 had been arrested, and in 2 cases there had been no arrest but there were concerns involving sexually abusive behaviour.

The panel, therefore, considered 16 cases over this 12 month period.

The figures quoted below refer to the 24 cases as mentioned above (unless otherwise stated).

### **Age, gender and ethnicity of young people**

<b>Age</b>	<b>No.</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>

### **Gender**

All 24 young people who came to our attention this year were male. This is not unusual, and it is rare that a young female is arrested for a sexual offence in Nottingham.

### **Ethnicity**

White	12
Black African/Caribbean	2
Black British / White	1
Asian	8
Other	1

## Previous Social Care involvement

Of the 24 cases outlined above 12 cases have been known to Social care previously, 4 of those cases is known to have witnessed domestic violence, 4 have suffered sexual abuse and 4 cases had previous concerns raised with regard to sexually inappropriate behaviours in the past. There is only 1 case highlighted to have been involved in previous sexual exploitation, with 1 other case having a strong suggestion to having been involved in sexual exploitation.

## Learning Difficulties

Of the 16 young people considered at Panel, 1 had "mild learning difficulties", 2 had moderate learning difficulties, 1 had a diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome and 3 had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. These were descriptions given at panel by the presenting social worker.

## Range of offences young people arrested for

Offence	Number
Rape	6
Rape child under 13	7
Indecent Assault	3
Sexual touching	1
Sexual Activity with a child	3
Child Sexual Exploitation offences	4
Distribution of Child Pornography	1
Indecent Exposure	1

Some young people are arrested for more than one offence, this will account for the fact that these numbers do not match the number of young people brought to panel.

## Victim Data

Age	Male	Female	Total
6		3	3
7		1	1
8	1		1
9			0
10	1	1	2
11		2	2
12		2	2
13		3	3
14		2	2
15		4	4

16			0
17			0
adult		2	2
total			22

The number of victims cannot easily be identified from the statistics given at panel, this is due to the 4 arrests for Sexual Exploitation charges. There are a number of victims connected to this case and police are still currently trying to identify the exact details. The numbers identified above will also reflect the fact that some alleged perpetrators was connected to more than one victim.

The pattern of victims' age distribution is varied. Female victims appear more at risk of sexual assault in their adolescent years. The figures for this year show a varied age range of victims, with only 2 of the total 22 victims being male.

### Outcomes

For the 24 youngsters who came to our attention the following outcomes are recorded:

Outcome	No.
Found not guilty at court	0
No further police action	4
Refused charge	4
Youth Conditional Caution	1
Referral Order	1
Awaiting CPS decision	1
Still on police bail back	12
Awaiting Trial Outcome	1

Some youngsters who were not prosecuted were referred on to appropriate agencies. The AEIP system also alerts the YOT to the identities of other youngsters open to the YOT for other types of offending, whose behaviour gives cause for concern but who are not prosecuted for sex offences. This enables the YOT to work with these children on their behaviour whilst on Orders for other types of offences. It is worth noting that the number of young people where no further action is recorded may represent cases where, although the evidence may present as poor, clear concerns have been noted (e.g. if victims are very young there is an understandable reluctance to prosecute if a trial is the likely outcome). It is of concern that there are still a high number of young people still on police bail for offences of this nature and have been on bail for some time.

## **Re-panels**

There was 1 case which should have been brought to panel for a second time during this period. This was due to the initial assessment having been carried out using the wrong date of birth and so the Social Worker could not complete a comprehensive assessment.

## **Issues to be addressed**

### **Changes of personnel**

In previous years the panel has had an Independent Reviewing Officer Chair; however since January 2013 the panel has been chaired by a member of the Youth Offending Team who specialises in working with young people who present sexually harmful behaviours. Changes have been made to the referral process in that Management decisions are made on each case that comes to the attention of the panel as to whether hearing the case at panel would benefit all concerned. This has enabled the panel system to run much more smoothly and cases referred to Children's Services received a swifter assessment and were brought to panel more regularly.

### **Youth Cautions and Conditional Cautions**

There have been 2 cases considered for the above and both will have been thoroughly assessed by a YOT police officer. One case was discussed and it was felt appropriate to offer a conditional caution, the other case was charged and brought to court and the young person received a 12 month Referral Order as it was felt that this case was too severe to have been dealt with by way of caution. This highlights good multi-agency working and a professional approach to risk management.

### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Support**

Throughout the whole of this period, we had the input from the Head to Head team. This was very positive and we have welcomed this continued expertise and advice. An ongoing problem has been where to refer the young people who are discussed at panel who, either because they are deemed less risky, or because they have not received an AIM2 assessment, have been unable to access a service which meets their needs and risks. We have been working with Head to Head to resolve this over this period and an agreement was reached that the MALT teams would do this work with the assistance of the Head to Head Team.

## **Liaison with other agencies**

The Panel has been attended by police officers from the Child Abuse Investigation Unit on several occasions and decisions have been made and recommendations forwarded to the Crown Prosecution Service following full multi agency discussion. This has been felt to have been a useful and effective process ensuring best outcomes for victims and alleged young perpetrators. Unfortunately regular police attendance (i.e. arresting officers) at the panel has been less common.

## **Sexual Exploitation**

The panel is very well placed to identify cases where young people arrested for sexual offences have been victims of sexual exploitation (i.e. where the youngster has been coerced into sexual activity by adults outside of the family) and the link between this and the young person's own sexually abusive behaviour must be recognised.

It should also be noted that there are a number of cases that have been heard at the Panel connected to Sexual Exploitation and the distribution of child pornography. In these cases there has been very close working relations between the police, social care and the YOT to ensure risk management and safety of others. Education has also been involved in these discussions and plans put in place to ensure victim safety.

## **Conclusion**

This year has again been spent consolidating the work of the panel, which continues to see improvements in the number of appropriate cases being brought to panel and the work carried out on these cases. Some excellent work has been carried out under the auspices of all the agencies involved but there are some areas still to be addressed as outlined in the report. Work needs to continue to focus on these areas in the coming year to ensure that the needs of young people who have harmful sexual behaviour and their victims continue to be seen as a priority within Safeguarding Children Board procedures and that they receive services vital to them as individuals in order to ensure their wellbeing and the safety of the citizens of Nottingham. For 2014 priorities should include embedding use of the panel more widely across Children and Families, with a clear mandate/steer from NSCB.

**Racheal Osborne**

**Practice Specialist and YOT lead for Young People with Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

**Nottingham Youth Offending Team  
Dec 2013**