

Nottingham Youth Offending Team

Assessment and Early Intervention Panel Report

April 2008 – March 2009

This report has been written to highlight the workings and achievements of the Assessment and Early Intervention Panel (AEIP) from April 2008 up to March 2009.

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 is derived from a multi-agency Steering Group which includes Children's Social Care (Chair), YOT, Education, Police and C.A.M.H.S.

Statistical Analysis of cases in which the Panel was involved

During the period April 1st 2008 to March 31st 2009, the YOT became aware of 38 young people who were arrested for a sexual offence. Of these, 24 were considered at panel, 5 were not taken to panel following a management decision and 9 failed to attend the panel. Seven of those who failed to attend panel were co-accused together and this case failed to get as far as prosecution. In addition to the 38 arrested young people, the panel also heard 1 case where there had been no arrest but there were concerns involving sexually abusive behaviour.

The panel, therefore, considered 25 cases over this 12 month period.

The figures quoted below refer to the 38 arrested cases plus the one case which was not an arrest (unless otherwise stated).

Age, gender and ethnicity of young people

Age	No.
11	1
12	4
13	2
14	2
15	10
16	7
17	13

All 39 young people who came to our attention this year were male.

Ethnicity

White	27
Black British	9
Black British / White	3

Learning Difficulties

Of the 25 young people *considered* at Panel, 3 had "learning difficulties" and 1 had "undiagnosed learning delay". However there is no clear definition of learning difficulty as often no definitive assessment of learning needs is carried out.

Range of offences

Offence	Number
Rape	26
Attempt rape	1
Assault by penetration	2
Attempt assault by penetration	2
Incite a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity	2
Sexual assault	3
Sexual touching	7
Indecent exposure	2
Engage in sexual activity with a 13 year old	1

Victim Data

Age	Male	Female	Total
4		1	1
6	1	1	2
7	1	1	2
8		1	1
10		1	1
12	1	4	5
13		21	21
14		9	9
15		2	2
16		1	1
n/k		3	3
adult		2	2

The number of victims exceeds (alleged) perpetrators, reflecting the fact that some offenders had more than 1 victim.

The pattern of victims' age distribution usually tends to show broadly that both male and female victims are equally at risk when they are younger whilst females are more at risk of sexual assault in their adolescent years. The figures for this year reflect fewer than usual male victims.

Outcomes

For the 39 youngsters who came to our attention the following outcomes are recorded:

Outcome	No.
Found not guilty at court	3
No further police action	27
Dealt with outside of the criminal justice process following panel intervention	2
No police involvement	1
Final Warning	2
Conditional Discharge	1
Referral Order	2
Supervision Order	1

Some youngsters who were not prosecuted were referred on to appropriate agencies. The AEIP system also alerts the YOT Practice Manager 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.

Repanels

There were 5 cases which were brought to panel for a second time during this period. These cases always cause great concern and of the 5, 2 in particular gave us considerable anxiety.

Issues to be addressed

Changes of personnel

Over the past year the panel has seen the change of Chair of the Panel and was without a social care representative on several occasions. In addition, there has not been a meeting of the Steering Group over this period. This has inevitably caused some discontinuity and lack of guidance and steer. However, over the past year, the panel system has been running much more smoothly and cases referred to Children's Services are receiving a swifter assessment and are being brought to panel more regularly.

Reprimands and Final Warnings

If a young person is given a reprimand for a sex offence, there is no opportunity for assessment by the YOT police officer and therefore, no opportunity to offer any resources to that young person. A concern has been raised by this panel in the past that a number of young people have been

given a reprimand as opposed to a final warning by police officers without the case coming to the AEIP. It is pleasing to see that this practice does not seem to have continued into this year and no reprimands have been given to youngsters for sex offences during the year.

There have been 2 Final Warnings issued this year and both will have been thoroughly assessed by a YOT police officer and followed by an intervention plan.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Support

Due to changes in protocols and financial agreements between various agencies, the support the Panel received from CAMHS, which has in the past been provided by the Young Abusers' Project at Thorneywood, was to a large extent withdrawn and there has been confusion over where to refer youngsters who need early intervention to address their abusive behaviour but who will not go through the Court process. The Steering Group needs to address this issue with some urgency. We need clarity around who will offer this specific service now. This has been an outstanding issue and was mentioned in last year's report. Despite this it has not yet been resolved.

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 (ie arresting officers) at the panel has been less common.

Sexual Exploitation

The panel has been concerned that at least one of the youngsters discussed appears to have been involved in child sexual exploitation (ie 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.

Conclusion

This year has again been spent consolidating the work of the panel, which has seen improvements in the number of cases being brought to panel and the work carried out on these cases. There has been some excellent work carried out under the auspices of all the agencies involved in the work of the panel but there are some areas still to be addressed as outlined in the report. Work needs to refocus 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 the safety of the citizens of Nottingham. **Glynis Storer**

Practice Manager for Young People with Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Nottingham Youth Offending Team

November 2009

Addendum: January 2010

Comment from the new Chair of the AEIP

The new Chair of the AEIP has spent a period of time gaining insight into the workings of the panel and understanding the processes involved in bringing a young person to it. It is apparent that some young people come to the panel a significant period after their alleged offence, making any outcome from the panel potentially redundant in respect of any impact with regard to outcomes. The time frame for coming to panel is restricted to a certain extent by the panel meeting fortnightly and being able to consider 4 cases in any one session. On occasion information about the offence and the victim statement information is not always clear from the police. There have been occasions when a young person has been brought to panel, when an outcome through the police has already occurred or Social Care have undertaken a significant piece of work with the young person and their family already, prior to panel. In these circumstances the panel can reasonably only note information about the young person for the records.

It is necessary for a Steering Group to be in operation and give guidance to the panel, to scrutinise its work and give advice on operational protocols, when the systems do not work in the manner the panel was intended. The Steering Group has not met for the past year or so and the AEIP needs guidance on its future functioning.

Helena Czapska: Chair