

Community Awards 2017

Shortlisted projects

Policing and adults category

Problem Gambling - Diversion Pathway for Criminal Justice System - Cheshire Constabulary and Beacon Counselling Trust

It has been identified that in excess of £8 million worth of fraud has been committed to fund problematic gambling from a number of offenders in Cheshire. There is a need for Cheshire Constabulary to address the root causes for gambling-related criminality. This is being achieved by working in partnership with the partner agencies from the private sector, which have experts in the field of treatment for persons with problematic gambling, to reduce the risk of reoffending and “break the cycle” by reducing crime and victims of crime.

This diversion pathway provides a unique opportunity to offer an appropriate alternative restorative sanction for a person’s committing crime, whilst presenting as a problem gambler. The individual will be educated, counselled and rehabilitated, in order to reduce the cycle of reoffending, by using Conditional Cautioning and Community Resolution opportunities with restorative orders to support rehabilitation and reduce persons entering into the prison system.

This project has been developed in collaboration with Gamcare, Beacon Counselling Trust and Mitie Care and Custody to screen persons entering into the Criminal Justice system for problem gambling. This screening will provide an early intervention treatment opportunity using this diversion pathway.

The Drug Education Programme Avon and Somerset Constabulary/Swanswell

The Programme provides police officers with an intervention option for drug possession instead of criminal prosecution. It seeks to:

- Increase access to drug treatment services
- Provide officers with an effective, simple disposal that enables them to support those who can be diverted
- Improve the relationship between drug support services and the police.

Police who find an individual in possession of any class of drugs, adult or juvenile regardless of their criminal history, can refer the individual into the programme. It is a one-off intervention, where individuals attend and are provided intervention and education around drugs, whilst also being assessed for further needs. This may be anything from educational material, to full support.

The programme has been developed by AIRS, the commissioned provider of in custody services; however the programme seeks to keep people away from the criminal justice system. Where someone attends and engages in the session, the drugs possession offence is not prosecuted and there is no record made. So far the programme has had over 500 referrals. The ethos is that if we believe in the effectiveness of drugs interventions, and believe those involved in drugs may need support rather than prosecution, we do this without criminalisation.

Offender Hub - Cambridgeshire Constabulary / Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Offender Hub is designed to tackle the root causes of early offending behaviour through conditional cautions. The new approach was introduced initially in Peterborough in September 2016 by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and HMP Peterborough and is now operating across the whole of Cambridgeshire.

Police powers are in place to deal with offenders; however, it is important we do all we can to steer people away from re-offending. People who commit low level crimes often have a range of underlying issues which need to be addressed. Suitable conditions are chosen to help address the underlying issues.

Examples of the kind of issues where support has been made available for individuals are: housing issues, anger management, drugs or alcohol misuse, mental health, employment, education and training and support for debt management. Compliance is monitored and if conditions are not met, the prosecution will continue.

Over 400 conditional cautions have been issued since the programme was launched. In 2016 Cambridgeshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cambridgeshire Constabulary were awarded £500,000 over two years from the Home Office Police Innovation Fund for this project.

Safe and Sound - London Borough of Havering in partnership with Havering Police

The Safe and Sound partnership is made up of representatives of businesses from both the day and night time economies. The work that Jane Eastaff from the Community Safety Team does is essential to bringing partners together.

Concerns regarding an increase in street drinkers and rough sleepers were raised at the same time from partners both in the day and night time economies. In order to reduce this Jane Eastaff has worked with the Police Homeless SPOC to introduce a co-ordinated multi-agency response to the problems.

This has included:

- One Stop Shop: a drop-in centre where homeless people can gain access to help to get them off the street. This is held at the Salvation Army on a regular basis and is attended by the Police Homeless SPOC, the Department of Work and Pensions (for help with benefits), the Westminster Drug Project (for drug and alcohol intervention), Thames Reach, Hope for Havering, Havering Housing Officers, Peabody and Victim Support IDVA.
- Days of Actions: Jane completed regular walk-arounds to identify homeless people and signpost them to help. Homeless people were given assistance and advice. This was also linked with the issuing of Community Protection Notices and warning letters and Section 35 Dispersal Notices for uncooperative people causing problems within the community. This type of approach helped to separate persistent problem-makers from those accepting assistance and wanting to change their lives.
- Task and Targeting Meeting: a monthly meeting with partners ranging from Housing, Mental health, Salvation Army, local Churches, Night shelter DWP, and WDP is arranged to discuss all rough sleepers and to look at how they are being assisted.

The result of this work is that numerous homeless people have been assisted and diverted from committing offences. This type of approach has a positive impact on diverting people from crime and offending and assisting the vulnerable and, as a result, it reduces the demand on police for dealing with minor offences.

Community Safety Unit (Operation Watson & Operation Floora), Domestic Violence Intervention and Perpetrator Intervention Team - Metropolitan Police Service

The Metropolitan Police Service and Royal Borough of Greenwich Safer Communities Team work in partnership to provide enhanced activity to support victims of domestic violence going through the criminal justice system with particular focus on cases where the victim is reticent to continue in the criminal justice process and cases where the victim has failed or withdraws their support for the prosecution. The team also provide enhanced activity to proactively enforce court orders, proactively arrest prolific 'offenders' to bring them to justice. The team will work with perpetrators in an effort to divert them away from offending.

The team is concerned with ensuring disruptive intervention for repeat and high risk DVA perpetrators, who live or offend in Royal Borough of Greenwich and intensive support for the repeat and high risk victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse, who live in Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Team Objectives:

- To increase confidence of repeat and high risk victims to report incidents of Domestic Abuse.
- To ensure the reduction of harm or potential harm faced by the high risk victims and reducing their repeat victimization rate.
- To reduce the offending rates of the highest risk and repeat perpetrators and ensuring that they are actively targeted via enforcement.

Diversion and Support Team - Devon and Cornwall Police

Offenders commit crime for a number of reasons although, for the vast majority, it is possible to identify some form of vulnerability. The North and West Devon Local Police Area Diversion and Support Team (DST) is a group of Police Officers and Police and Community Support Officers rooted in a multi-agency setting including Devon Partnership Trust (Mental Health) staff and key partner agencies that seeks to use innovation to address those vulnerabilities.

It works holistically and collaboratively with the individual and those partner agencies to agree a suitable support and intervention programme encouraging them to address the root causes of their offending in order to divert them from the Criminal Justice System. To date, the team has received over 100 referrals and has seen a 60% reduction in reoffending of those that it engages.

As the engagement is purely voluntary, a great deal of determination, tenacity and persuasion is required of the partnership, which they demonstrate in abundance, in persuading some significant offenders to engage. Working 'outside the box' though within ethical boundaries, they work collaboratively to achieve outcomes which impact positively on the individual as well as the demand of the organisation, partner agencies and the wider community.