

Fact Sheet 16: Managing High Risk Youth Pilot Project

Context: It is well documented that young people who offend can present with an array of emotional, behavioural and interpersonal problems. Nonetheless, this is a group that is marginalised in society and who are either unable or unwilling to access typical mainstream resources with services often having to outsource specialist forensic mental health assessments and opinions. In response to this unmet need, the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice is launching a pilot project aimed at supporting local authorities in their attempts to ensure best practice in forensic mental health risk assessment and management for young people. The Managing High Risk Youth Project will be officially launched on 2nd September 2013. Whilst located in Glasgow, the overarching aim of the project is to ensure all high risk young people and families, regardless of where they live, have access to best advice, practice assessment and interventions addressing their mental health, psychological and forensic risk and needs across Scotland.

Project: The project team, which includes a lead clinician (a consultant clinical and forensic psychologist), a clinical psychologist and senior social workers, will support social work assessments and interventions with young people in line with GIRFEC. Depending on the case presentation and needs, three different levels of intervention will be offered:

Level 1: Consultation: The referrer can request a consultation meeting with the panel during which they can explore any concerns over the young person's functioning, mental health, emotional, behavioural and interpersonal functioning and how this might be relevant to their risk. Using the principles of structured professional judgement, the panel will help the referrer develop (or refine) a working risk analysis or formulation, and risk management plan. Where there is a need for additional assessments, referrers will be invited to progress to level 2.

Level 2: Specialist Assessment: For complex cases, the provision of specialist forensic mental health/psychological assessments examining, for example, cognitive level, personality style, attachment disorder, trauma, developmental disorders, etc. will be available and where non-acute treatment needs are identified the lead professional will be offered on-going support and guidance to help address the presenting problems. Where necessary, and in a small proportion of cases, direct intervention with the young person may be required – a level 3 intervention (see below).

Level 3: Specialist Treatment. For a small proportion of cases, the clinical psychologist, in conjunction with the lead consultant and forensic psychologist will provide an individualised treatment to the young person meeting forensic mental health needs. This will be a formulation led treatment that is informed by theory and that is sequenced and delivered according to the presenting problems and abilities of the young person.

**Referrers should note that where any symptoms of acute mental illness (e.g., psychotic illnesses, major mood disorder such as bipolar affective disorder, etc) or disorders that require a psychiatric evaluation or urgent response (e.g. serious self-harm or suicidality) are identified, the young person should first be referred to their local CAMHS team for an opinion. Similarly, if the project team identify these concerns through the course of their involvement with the young person, they may also initiate a referral. This does not however preclude the involvement of this project to aid in risk assessment, formulation and management and appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure effective interagency working.*

Outcomes: By referring a young person to the project, they and their families will receive a service that may not typically be available to them, to address issues of need, mental health and risk. Workers will be supported with high risk cases, and more detailed assessments will be available to decisions makers, resulting in more needs led decisions. This in turn will reduce the risks these young people present and contribute to the safety of our communities.

Referrals for the project are being taken now. Please find referral and consent form at www.cjsw.ac.uk

To discuss a potential referral or for further information please contact the CYCJ on 0141 444 8700

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