

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 05/18

Date: June 2018

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: An update to Cookhamwood new arrangements.

Cookhamwood Young Offenders Institution - New Arrangements

Medway Council had an arrangement with Cookhamwood for a number of years where the delivery of casework had been completed by Medway Council staff within Cookhamwood. The model within Cookhamwood was confused and the Designated Social Worker(s) role and responsibilities had been inconsistent with that agreed within the arrangements with the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

Medway Council undertook a review and made a number of changes to the structure and framework around Cookhamwood. The reason for this change included:

- 1) The cost of running this model through Medway was at a higher cost than that achieved internally.
- 2) When needing to recruit, Cookhamwood need to gain approval through Medway. This created time delays putting young people and staff at risk.
- 3) The YJB and National leads agreed this was a good time to review and the changes proposed were to the benefit of children and young people.
- 4) The removal of the complicated funding model.
- 5) We had created an isolated team not embedded within the wider safeguarding team at Cookhamwood.
- 6) No other authority has wanted to run this model themselves when presented this opportunity through informal discussions.
- 7) Clear model of work for the designated Social Worker.

These changes increased front line practice and support to young people and have created a clear role for the local authority for the designated Social Worker roles. See appendix 1 for the specification agreed with the YJB. These roles sit within the Youth Offending Team (in Children's Services) locking safeguarding and offending together.

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Appendix 1:

In March 2014 following review the YJB agreed to continue to fund the dedicated social work provision across YOIs indefinitely. The intention of this provision is three fold:

- a. to support looked after children and children in need in custody
- b. to support Governors in meeting their statutory duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004
- c. to ensure Local Authorities meet their own responsibilities towards children in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and subsequent legislation.

Dedicated social workers should have a role in working with those children identified as having greatest risk to their safety and wellbeing and who may be being supported by Children's Social Care. In doing so Dedicated Social Workers will be expected to comply with the 1989 Children Act and the April 2014 guidance

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300342/Guidance_revised_following_consultation.pdf) and in Wales the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act, once the codes of conduct and regulations come into effect.

Statutory responsibilities for the safety and protection of children in custody rest with establishment governors and local authorities. However, the dispersed and complex nature of the secure population means that additional complementary direct social work support is required to ensure that those children with the highest level of need including looked after children are cared for and supported appropriately.

Children's Social Workers have relevant and specialist professional knowledge and expertise to provide this support and are well placed to support Governors to fulfil their statutory duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Employment through the Local Authority affords an additional layer of transparency and accountability.

Dedicated Social Workers in YOIs are expected to work with all young people in YOIs – both remanded and sentenced. However, particular attention will be given to:

- young people who are, or have been, looked after or cared for by the Local Authority

- young people who enter custody subject to a child protection plan or where there are significant risks to safety and wellbeing and/or at risk of self harm/suicide/harm from others or those identified as potentially children in need upon release (in Wales those identified as having a need for care and support).

Dedicated Social Workers in YOIs will employ a number of methods to achieve the above objective, including (but not limited to):

- Provide a range of services to young people placed in custody to including direct work with young people outside of the 60% restricted core hours allotted for education.
- Management of (and, where necessary, introduction of) effective screening, identification and oversight processes for all young people entering the establishment to ensure that social workers are able to appropriately support target service users. These should align with (and where necessary improve) existing safeguarding processes.
- Develop links via Case Workers and home YOTs with relevant service providers e.g. Local Authorities; Police; Health; Probation to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities and to secure the best outcomes for young people.
- Develop and maintain effective links between establishment and Local Authorities both home and host in liaison with the Case Work Team and YOT. In doing so work in conjunction with Independent Reviewing Officers to ensure that Local Authorities meet their responsibilities towards children in custody and at release.
- Working in partnership with all providers in an establishment wide multi-disciplinary approach to effective intervention and resettlement planning.
- Sharing information to feed into the 'one assessment' and 'one plan' approach.
- Assist in the development and up dating of children's safeguarding policies and procedures within the establishment including for children visiting the establishment.
- Attendance at meetings relevant to the area of work including the Safeguarding Committee and Sentence Planning and Review Meetings for those young people with whom the dedicated social workers may be actively working.
- Advise Senior Prison Service Managers on all Child Protection issues; both legal as well as practice issues.
- Advise and support the safeguarding team on making child protection (s47) or child in need (s17) referrals to the relevant Authority where appropriate.

- Collection and provision of data and information to both YJB and Local Authorities as required.
- Demonstrate the skills and knowledge as expected by the Chief Social Worker once published. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/knowledge-and-skills-for-child-and-family-social-work>). In Wales adherence will be expected with any relevant guidance linked to the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act.

Appropriate supervision for social workers should be provided by the host local authority. The source of supervision will be dependant upon structure within the local authority. Additionally, it is a statutory requirement for all social workers to carry out continuous professional development and this is checked by the regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). LGA Employer Standard 6, which employers are expected to abide by, says all employers should provide time, resources and support for continuous professional development. This assists social workers maintain their professional registration which is essential for practice.

<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6188796/The+Standards+-+updated+July+01+2014/146988cc-d9c5-4311-97d4-20dfc19397bf>

Dedicated Social Workers in YOIs will deliver a number of positive outcomes for both young people. These will include:

- All young people who are, or have been in the past, looked after or cared for by the Local Authority are identified and supported to access the statutory services to which they are entitled
- All young people where significant risk is identified to their safety and wellbeing are referred appropriately and fully supported by those who are best able to meet their needs

In turn these will contribute to the YOI fulfilling its statutory safeguarding duties and young people feel safe. The following services are not included in this specification and will not be undertaken by dedicated Social Workers in YOIs:

- Undertaking Child Protection investigations
- Fulfilling duties and functions undertaken by YOT teams in YOIs (where relevant)
- Discharging duties of home Local Authorities in relation to children and young people who are, or have been, looked after or cared for by their Local Authority.

Ensuring facilities are available within establishments to enable the DSWs to effectively undertake their duties (i.e. desk space, IT access). Invite Dedicated Social Workers to attend or have appropriate representation at relevant internal meetings.