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Welsh Government

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Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board Pilot Resettlement Support Panel Scheme

Research Summary

Social research

Number: 13/2012

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) funded six Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) in Wales to expand resettlement for young people aged 12 to 17 who were leaving custody. Under the pilot scheme, Resettlement Support Panels (RSPs) were established to facilitate the use of a multi-agency approach to support young people's resettlement and to prevent young people from entering custody. This included addressing substance misuse, accommodation problems, mental health issues, and education or employment needs as well as mediating with families and peers, and encouraging more appropriate use of leisure time. Case studies of the implementation, and analysis of outcomes for young people, were carried out, compared to a comparison group.

Findings:

A comparison of reoffending and other indicators through the Asset scores of the young people who had taken part in the pilot resettlement schemes, compared with others with the same background characteristics, was undertaken. However, this proved difficult due to data access issues, its completeness and comparability, and the fact that young people were receiving other resettlement support, not necessarily through the pilot schemes. Custody rates did drop in each case study area, and there was strong qualitative evidence to suggest that young people had benefited from the resettlement work conducted through the pilot schemes.

Summary of recommendations

- YOTs, the police, social housing providers, social services, CAMHS and education providers should be represented on RSPs.
- Liaison is needed with the secure estate and this should be led by a dedicated member of staff.

Dadansodi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy

Recommendations (continued)

The review body

- The effectiveness of resettlement work should be reviewed on a systematic basis by each individual YOT based on an assessment of specific cases. This work should include examining whether all relevant agencies are meeting their full responsibilities.

The Resettlement Support Workers and Supervision Support Workers

- Individual one-to-one work with young people should underpin resettlement work but the exact model by which this is done and the nature of the personnel involved should be determined locally. This should be within a national framework of expectations about the function and purpose of resettlement work.
- The focus of resettlement work should continue to ensure that the individual needs of the young people are met. This should include

brokerage, assisting young people to access services and practical support.

- The work of the member of staff leading on resettlement should be distinct from that of personnel whose roles are related to the sentence imposed on a young person.
- Staff leading on resettlement should engage with the young people early during their involvement with the youth justice system, starting at the Pre-sentence Review stage.
- A focus on promoting self-confidence and self-worth among the young people should be integral to the resettlement process.

Outcomes for young people

- YOTs should examine the existing range of diversionary activities offered in their areas to avoid duplication.
- YOTs should collect Asset and other data on a more systematic and comprehensive basis. Full completion of the

assessments is essential if evidence-based decisions and effective review is to take place in future.

Overview of case studies and conclusions

The operational models used by the six YOTs varied and were designed locally to respond to the needs of young people in each area. Four YOTs used existing panels while two set up new bodies. RSPs reviewed their work periodically and two did so as part of their Enhanced Review Process.

Typically RSP membership included YOT staff, the police, housing representatives, CAMHS, community safety organisations and education and training providers.

Generally, members felt that the RSPs worked effectively. Those attending meetings had sufficient authority to contribute effectively to RSPs' work and to commit resources to meeting young people's needs. However, the engagement of different agencies varied. This meant that not all

organisations supported resettlement equally.

While not all YOTs used dedicated RSWs, in all cases a member of staff was responsible for resettlement. The RSWs focused on one-to-one work with the young people, although in one YOT the RSW worked with groups of young people.

RSWs or equivalent staff usually came from a YOT, youth work or social work background.

The model of delivery and the staffing arrangement mattered less than the quality and nature of the work being done to support young people's resettlement. To be successful resettlement work needed to be distinct and not something which the young people had to do as part of their sentence. Successful resettlement work dovetailed with the work being done by other YOT personnel, but it approached the young people from a specific and distinct angle.

The type of work RSWs undertook in the six case study areas varied. Its main focus was on supporting the young people, mediating on their behalf and brokering support

from different agencies to ensure their needs were met. This included helping them to access their entitlements in terms of benefits and accommodation, ensuring that other agencies' support was appropriate (for example that housing was suitable and that education and training providers recognised their needs) and mediating with families and friends.

In some YOTs the work included diversionary activities and in one the funding was used to buy items that young people needed to support living in the community.

A comparison of reoffending and other indicators through the Asset scores of the young people who had taken part in the pilot resettlement schemes compared with others with the same background characteristics was undertaken. However, this proved difficult due to data access issues, its completeness and comparability, and the fact that young people were receiving other resettlement support, not necessarily through the pilot schemes. However, custody rates dropped in each case study area, and there was strong qualitative

evidence to suggest that young people had benefited from the resettlement work conducted through the pilot schemes.

5. Case Studies

YOT 1

The resettlement worker engaged with young people from Pre-sentence Review stage onwards. The use of an existing resettlement panel enhanced multi-agency working around effective resettlement. The take-up of support was disappointing. Levels of offending reduced among young people over the course of the pilot scheme and resettlement was better organised as a consequence of the RSP.

YOT 2

The RSW was a former YOT case manager with a good understanding of resettlement and the local area. He advocated and mediated on behalf of the young people and brokered services that they needed. This work helped to resolve accommodation issues and improved access to education and training. The RSP strengthened partnerships and resources were committed as required individually by relevant organisations.

YOT 3

The RSW worked directly with the young people on a one-to-one basis to meet their needs and coordinate the support they needed. Young people engaged with the support services and the activities offered to them and were helped to take up a range of education, training and employment opportunities through the pilot scheme. The RSP in this area had improved partnership working although there were issues around resource allocation.

YOT 4

In this YOT, existing panels were used as the basis for separate strategic-level and operational-level RSPs. Staff already in post delivered the resettlement support. Some of the resettlement funding was used to purchase items that met young people's immediate needs. Initially, there were differences in the extent to which partners committed resources to support young people's resettlement but multi-agency working had improved. The resettlement work delivered under the pilot scheme had improved a range of outcomes for the young

people including greater self-esteem and confidence.

YOT 5

The RSP had nurtured a multi-agency approach to resettlement, including a readiness to commit supporting resources. Initially, a full-time RSW was employed to support 10-15 young people by accompanying them on diversionary activities and mediating on their behalf. However, the individual work was subsequently replaced by group work, which was seen by some interviewees as being less effective than the individual work. Young people's engagement with education, training and employment had improved and resettlement work meant that more appropriate accommodation had been secured for many of the young people.

YOT 6

Resettlement was discussed at an existing panel at YOT 6. This had resulted in more effective information-sharing and partnership working. There was no dedicated RSW but a member of staff led on resettlement. The YOT used diversionary activities, education,

training and employment packages and support services to support young people's resettlement. Young people leaving custody had accessed more appropriate accommodation and benefited from the mediation and one-to-one support provided through the resettlement work.

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ISBN 978 0 7504 7493 1