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**PAPER NO.**

**REASON FOR SUBMISSION:** Application for funding to support ongoing delivery of the Triage project in Suffolk by Suffolk Youth Offending Service

**SUBMITTED TO:** Police and Crime Commissioner

**SUBJECT:** Delivery of Triage pilot by Suffolk Youth Offending Service

**SUMMARY:**

To provide a business case that supports the request for funding to deliver the Triage project within Suffolk

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Police and Crime Commissioner is asked to approve the funding request of £55,000 for 2013/14 to support delivery of the Suffolk triage pilot

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Government policy initiatives (primarily through the Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and sentencing of Offenders Green paper) emphasises the critical importance of preventing young people 'beginning a pattern of criminal behaviour that could last into adulthood'. If young people can be prevented from entering the system, then there is also a reduced prospect of future offending, relative to those whose lives become closely linked with the criminal justice system from an early age.

1.2 The key strategic outcomes of Triage are:

- An elimination of unnecessary processing of young people through the criminal justice system (First Time Entrants)
- More efficient and effective targeting of resources at an early point in the process
- Significant improvements in the life prospects for young people involved in offending behaviour, victims of crime and the wider community
- Early help and intervention takes the high volume out of the system which allows the YOS to maintain its service to higher risk young offenders at a time of significant budget reductions

- 1.3 Triage aims to prevent young people from re-offending and divert them from coming into the criminal justice system by assessing and delivering interventions much earlier than before.
- 1.4 Triage diversion may lead to an intervention, dependant on the assessment of need, providing targeted services to reduce the risk factors associated with the behaviour. A restorative approach is used for all young people diverted through Triage to hold the young person to account for the offence. The level of involvement requested by the victim determines the extent of the restorative approach but, as a minimum, every young person has to engage meaningfully in a restorative discussion with a member of YOS staff and produce a statement of explanation.

### **Aims of Triage**

- Provide enhanced levels of information and assessment to aid the Police / Crown Prosecution Service decision making process for 10-17 year olds
- Divert young people committing low level offences away from the criminal justice system at the earliest opportunity
- Target offending prevention activity more effectively and efficiently
- Increase the involvement of victims through restorative justice approaches
- Increase public confidence in the criminal justice system

## **2. Suffolk Pilot Model**

- 2.1 A Suffolk Constabulary / SYOS led conference, 'The Challenge in Tackling Youth Offending' was held in February 2011, attended by 100 delegates from across a range of agencies. One of the key recommendations from that event was the development of a Triage initiative basing a YOS worker in police custody centres. A scoping exercise was completed in September 2011 and a clinic model was agreed for piloting in Suffolk based at the Martlesham Heath Police Investigation Centre (PIC), covering mainly the Ipswich Borough Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council areas. This demonstrates that Triage has broad multi-agency support in order to deliver early help based on assessed need in the context of restorative justice.
- 2.2 The pilot called Challenge 4 Change commenced in April 2012. Young people arrested and brought to the PIC who meet the criteria are bailed to return in 28 days. They receive an appointment to attend a Triage clinic within 24 hours of this first contact. A member of YOS staff will see the young person and their parent / carer at the Martlesham Heath PIC and complete an initial assessment to determine the level of intervention required:

Level 1 – Where there is little risk of re-offending and minimal risk in terms of welfare issues the intervention will concentrate on a restorative element (generally a statement of explanation and work around consequences.)

Level 2 – Where a young person is known to other agencies and has welfare issues along with medium to high risk of re-offending. The intervention will begin with a full assessment followed by a 6 – 12 week programme to address the risk factors, again also including a restorative element
- 2.3. Providing the young person engages with the intervention their requirement to answer bail in 28 days will be cancelled and No Further Action will be taken in relation to the offence(s) they were arrested for. If they have no previous offending history then this will directly impact on reducing the First Time Entrants figures in Suffolk.

- 2.4 Initial findings for the first 12 months of the pilot suggest that Triage is contributing to a reduction in the number of First Time Entrants for Suffolk and a reduction in the re-offending rates, compared with young people receiving formal out of court disposals. However, as previously stated in terms of measuring re-offending rates young people should be tracked for 12 months after they have completed their Triage intervention.
- 2.5 The SYOS Management Board, which includes Suffolk Constabulary representation, has agreed, to roll out the Triage pilot to all of the PIC's that cover Suffolk during September 2013. This will enable a more thorough evaluation of the programme to take place for the following 12 months as numbers increase.
- 2.6 The government has issued guidance on community resolutions which is widely anticipated to reduce the volume, which will mean that Triage numbers will increase
- 2.7 Feedback from parents is very encouraging. Below are three quotes selected from an overall positive picture:

"There were a lot of problems with my son at school, he would go but spent a lot of time in corridors and in the inclusion room. Now he is going to classes."

"It's done him good to have someone else to reinforce what we as parents have said"

"It worked well...she says please and thank you, she does house work, she tells us that she loves us, she does chores and she never used to."

### 3. **Performance**

- 3.1 From April 2012 to March 2013 there were a total of 88 young people accessing the Triage pilot at Martlesham Heath PIC, with an average of 7 referrals a month. Whilst re-offending rates for young people are tracked for 12 months following the Triage intervention, early tracking shows that of the 63 young people who received a Triage intervention during this period (closed cases only), 6 had re-offended equating to 9.5%.
- 3.2 In Suffolk the latest available re-offending data shows that 26.2% of young people receiving a Reprimand re-offended within 12 months and 24.5% of young people receiving a Final warning also re-offended within 12 months. These were the formal pre-court disposal options available to the Police during this period and which young people going through Triage would have been most likely to have received if they had not engaged with Triage.

## 4 **Triage Data and Outcome Delivery**

- 4.1 Baseline and quantitative data is being collected, although in terms of re-offending data this requires the tracking of young people 12 months after they have completed a Triage intervention. University Campus Suffolk will be completing an evaluation on the effectiveness of the pilot at the Martlesham Heath PIC from August 2013 with final report to be available by the end of the year.
- 4.2 Subject to funding approval it is proposed that the outcomes to be reported on are:
- Number of successful Restorative Justice programmes delivered
  - Reduction in re-offending rates

- Reduction in number of first time entrants to the youth justice system
- Numbers referred into substance misuse programmes

In addition the University Campus Suffolk evaluation report will also provide a qualitative source of information that will enhance the outcome data.

## **5. Suffolk Police and Crime Plan**

5.1 The Triage pilot provides an opportunity for early intervention and support for young people and families to prevent re-offending. The Triage pilot contributes to objectives 3 and 4 in the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan by:

- Reducing re-offending
- Providing high quality service to victims
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- Supporting vulnerable families
- Supporting crime prevention activity
- Improving trust and confidence in the criminal justice system

5.2. In addition the Triage pilot is supporting the work of the emerging priority areas for the Suffolk Health and wellbeing Board:

- Early intervention and prevention
- Supporting parents to improve their own circumstances
- Promoting a family focus across the work of all agencies including support to Troubled Families

## **6. Ofsted Safeguarding Inspection 2013 - Suffolk**

6.1 The official feedback from Ofsted will be published on 12 July. However, the inspectors received information about the Triage programme and in the feedback at the end of the unannounced visit, the early help offer in Suffolk was felt to be reasonably developed. Triage is beginning to embed as a very credible scheme for offering early help to those caught up in offending behaviour.

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