

The background of the page features a photograph of a police officer in a dark uniform and cap, smiling and looking towards a group of young people. The image is partially obscured by a large blue diagonal overlay on the left side.

IMPROVING RESPONSES TO YOUNG ADULTS

A decorative horizontal line consisting of a series of small white squares on a dark background, resembling a checkered pattern.

**A Checklist for Police
and Crime Commissioners**

The **Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A)** is a coalition of 13 criminal justice, health and youth organisations, which identifies and promotes effective ways of working with young adults throughout the criminal justice process. Convened by the Barrow Cadbury Trust since 2008, its membership encompasses Addaction, Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG), Catch22, The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Clinks, the Criminal Justice Alliance, the Howard League for Penal Reform, Nacro, the Prince's Trust, the Prison Reform Trust, Revolving Doors Agency, the Young Foundation and Young Minds.

www.t2a.org.uk

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Published March 2014

Design and print: Creative Media Colour
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is convened and funded by BARROW



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INTRODUCTION

First Generation: One Year On¹ showed that across the country a number of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are beginning to work innovatively to bring partners together around shared crime prevention and community safety agendas, while many PCCs are also helping to pioneer responses to groups that pose a high risk of offending, but often fall through gaps in local services.

This briefing edition focuses on how PCCs can help to improve responses to young adults (18-24) and improve the transition to adulthood. It makes a number of recommendations based on our knowledge of what works for this group (see appendix), and highlights current work by PCCs that are already prioritising this age group.

This briefing comprises a checklist for PCCs to consider as they continue to review their police and crime plans and develop their strategic approach. It makes the case that all PCCs should:

- 1** Include specific provision for young adults in local diversion and crime prevention strategies
- 2** Work with partners to reduce young adult reoffending
- 3** Champion improved policing of young adults
- 4** Engage with young adults

1. Revolving Doors Agency (2013), *First Generation: One Year On. How police and crime commissioners are shaping local responses to young adults, people with complex needs and other key groups* London: Revolving Doors Agency. Available here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/first-generation-one-year-on/>

YOUNG ADULTS: A priority group for PCCs



Young adults aged 18-24 are the most likely age group to come into contact with the police and criminal justice system, both as suspects and offenders and as the victims of crime. They are only 10% percent of the population, but account for roughly a third of police time and probation caseloads. Yet, criminal justice interventions aimed at adults often fail to prevent further offending by this group: three-quarters of young adults leaving prison are reconvicted within two years and they have the highest breach rates of those serving community sentences.

“Three-quarters of young adults leaving prison are reconvicted within two years and they have the highest breach rates of community sentences”.



Many young adults who come into contact with the criminal justice system have a range of needs, such as poor mental health, drug and alcohol problems. Many struggle to find a sustainable income or a place to live, and too often end up falling through the gaps between youth and adult services, which fail to take account of young adults' variable levels of maturity during their transition to adulthood.

Recognition has been growing around the need for a distinct approach to young adults in the criminal justice system: Sentencing Council guidelines for adults now include 'lack of maturity' as a mitigating factor; ACPO's Children and Young People's Strategy includes a focus on young adults; and the 2013 Crown Prosecution Service Code of Conduct for prosecution of adults that includes 'maturity' as a factor in the public interest test for charging decisions.

WHAT CAN PCCS DO?

Four out of 42 police and crime plans specifically mention young adults, although many more (38) make reference to young people more broadly without specifying whether this included those above 18. PCCs are in a unique position within the criminal justice system in being able to encourage and facilitate a local approach that bridges the divide between youth and adulthood.

To do this, there are four areas for PCCs to consider as they renew their strategic approach.

1

INCLUDE YOUNG ADULTS IN LOCAL DIVERSION AND CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES

In their police and crime plans, most PCCs stressed the importance of taking opportunities to divert young people away from crime, with many echoing a similar view to the Hampshire PCC Simon Hayes:

“ In recent years too many young people have been criminalised by our ‘system’. There is a need for targeted earlier intervention, an increase in diversionary opportunities, and greater use of restorative interventions which could improve victim outcomes and offender rehabilitation.

(Hampshire police and crime plan, p. 22)

”

There has been significant progress in employing diversionary approaches in youth justice; including youth triage schemes and the use of restorative approaches. However, too often these cut off sharply at the age of 18, regardless of the maturity of the individual or their level of need. This leads to many young adults being criminalised by the system, when another disposal may have been more appropriate to address the underlying causes of their behaviour.



To address this, PCCs should:

-  **Consider whether existing local youth diversionary or youth triage schemes could be extended and developed to include the young adult age group.**
-  **Review the use of out of court disposals, including conditional cautions, for this age group, and consider how they could be used more effectively to divert young adults away from crime.**
-  **Support and expand opportunities for community resolution and restorative justice for young adults pre and post-sentence.**
-  **Conduct a local needs analysis of young adults coming into contact with the police to better inform crime prevention and diversion strategies with partners.**
-  **Work closely with health commissioners, such as the local NHS England Health in the Justice System Team, to ensure that the particular needs of young adults are included in local plans such as the roll out of the all-age mental health liaison and diversion services.**



Case Study: South Wales Bridgend County 18-25 project

South Wales PCC, Alun Michael, is supporting a pilot project targeted at 18-25 year olds at risk of antisocial behaviour, offending, and reoffending. The pilot has been established with partners from the Local Authority, Youth Offending Service (YOS), Probation and the voluntary sector, and has two key areas of focus:

- **“Relapse prevention” and out of court disposals -**
A triage scheme has been developed whereby young adults (aged 18-21) that have previously been involved with YOS are identified if they come into police custody and linked back into the YOS team for further targeted support. There is also work underway to expand out of court disposals to the 18-25 age groups, and to gather more information on the support needs of young adults coming into custody to identify gaps in provision and develop a more evidence-based approach to the provision of diversionary pathways.
- **Employment, apprenticeships and training**
The PCC is supporting a scheme to take the financial risk of employing a young adult with a criminal record away from small local businesses. The project identifies a local business with a genuine vacancy, explains the project to the employer and young person, and then the PCC covers insurance costs, training costs, costs of equipment needed, as well as 50% of the wages for the first three months. If they successfully complete the trial period, the young person will become employed like any other member of staff.

South Wales has since received a Home Office grant for the *“rollout of youth offending team principles to young adults”*.²

2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-offices-20-million-reward-for-police-innovation>

2

WORK WITH PARTNERS TO REDUCE YOUNG ADULT REOFFENDING

Reoffending is too high among young adults. The work of the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A) has demonstrated the benefits of a distinct approach, working intensively with young adults to provide personalised, welfare-based approaches and enable them to 'get on with their lives' and desist from offending behaviour. This approach dramatically reduced both reconvictions and breach rates.³

PCCs can play a key role in embedding this approach locally, and some have identified it as a priority. As Leicestershire PCC, Sir Clive Loader, states:

“ There is national evidence that [young adults] benefit from a bespoke approach that supports their transition into a constructive and crime free adulthood. With partners, I would like to ensure that our approach with this group is as effective as possible. This will require an analysis of offending related needs across the pathways out of offending for this age group including education, employment and training, and it will need to be underpinned by local experience and national research, so that the design of interventions and commissioning is well informed.

(Leicestershire police and crime plan, p.37)

3. For further information on the T2A pathway see *Pathways from Crime: Ten steps to a more effective approach for young adults in the criminal justice process*, available here: <http://www.t2a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/T2A-Pathways-from-Crime.pdf>



Issues for PGCs to consider include:

-  **Working with the Youth Offending Services, probation partners and relevant non-criminal justice providers to help ensure a smooth transition between youth offending services and adult probation at 18.**
-  **Consider how local Integrated Offender Management (IOM) models and principles could be expanded to young adult offenders, and shaped around their particular needs.⁴**
-  **Encourage the local Criminal Justice Board to review resettlement pathways for young adult offenders, and consider how partners could ensure adequate young adult specific provision for a range of needs locally.**
-  **Support employment initiatives locally that include access for young adults with criminal convictions.**



Case Study: Wales (IOM)

The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru board initiated this work to establish how an all-Wales IOM strategy could support young adults (16-25 years old) in the CJS. Young adults were recognised by IOM Cymru as a priority group within the system, with distinct needs, for whom a number of gaps exist between youth and adult services.

There is overwhelming support from practitioners for a new approach that recognises young adults as an important and distinct service user group. Much can be achieved without the need for legislative change and without the need for large-scale investment in new services. They look at an approach which is about inter-agency cooperation, better service design, responsive approaches, a better understanding of maturity, and how to support clients transitioning from youth to adult services which so often radically differ from one another. It is also clear that IOM is seen as a good vehicle through which to implement a different, multi-agency, and more coherent approach to supporting young adults in the CJS.

4. A series of recommendations on how IOM arrangements can be tailored more effectively to this group are included in Clink's Integrated Offender Management Cymru *All Wales Youth to Adult Transition Model final report*, available here: http://www.t2a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Clinks_2013_IOM_young-adults-in-Wales_CONSULTATION.pdf

3

CHAMPIONING IMPROVED POLICING OF YOUNG ADULTS

Young adults are the most likely age group to come into contact with the police, and these contacts can lead to damaged relations and mistrust that lasts for years. A recent report from the Police Foundation for T2A found that on the whole young adults often feel over-policed and under-protected.⁵ Priority areas relating to young adults and the police were stop and search, and the policing of the night time economy. Young adults reported that older police officers and women police officers were often better at engagement than young male officers. Young adults from BAME communities are far more likely to come into contact with the police,

“ Young adults, particularly young men, are more likely than any other age group to be stopped and searched, with young black men seven times more likely to be stopped and searched than their white counterparts.”⁶

and are stopped and searched at a much greater rate, than white young adults.

While operational policing is not the direct remit of the PCC, some are beginning to use their role in holding the police force to account to tackle some of these issues, with a number of PCCs highlighting their intention to review stop and search procedures in their area.



To help tackle these issues, PCCs should:



Review the use of stop and search on young adults.



Invest in developing a stronger evidence base for improved policing practices for this group, including policing the night-time economy.



Review training in how police officers respond to young adults and develop modules focused on taking account of developmental maturity.

5. Graham, J., *Policing Young Adults: A scoping study* London: The Police Foundation. Available here: http://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/policing_young_adults1.pdf

6. Graham, J., *Policing Young Adults: A briefing for Police and Crime Commissioners* London: The Police Foundation, p. 2. Available here: http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/uploads/holding/projects/pol_young_adults_%20PCC_brief.pdf

4

ENGAGING WITH YOUNG ADULTS

In order to effectively hold the police force to account on these issues, PCCs also need to listen to the voice of young adults in their area. Most PCCs have made specific arrangements to engage young people as part of their responsibility to represent the whole community within their force area. A range of interesting models have been developed, for example Cheshire's appointing of a youth champion, and a number of PCCs including Dorset (Martyn Underhill) and Gloucestershire (Martin Surl) pledging to engage with their local youth parliament or setting up dedicated youth engagement groups.⁷

It is important that PCCs engage with young people in a meaningful way, with their experience used to genuinely shape policy. Lessons could be learnt from pilots in Leicestershire and Hampshire where the Youth Commission for Policing and Crime is helping PCCs engage with

young people aged 14-25.⁸ Cleveland (Barry Coppinger) and Hampshire (Simon Hayes) have also pledged to engage with young people who have been in contact with the criminal justice system.⁹



PCCs should:



Ensure the transition to adulthood process and the young adult age group are specifically included in youth engagement strategies, and that the impact of this is regularly reviewed.



Make a particular effort to engage with young adults in contact with the criminal justice system, both as victims and offenders, and ensure that their experience shapes policy.

7. A range of models of youth engagement have been collated by NCVYS, available here: <http://pccyouthcharter.wordpress.com/youthengagement/>

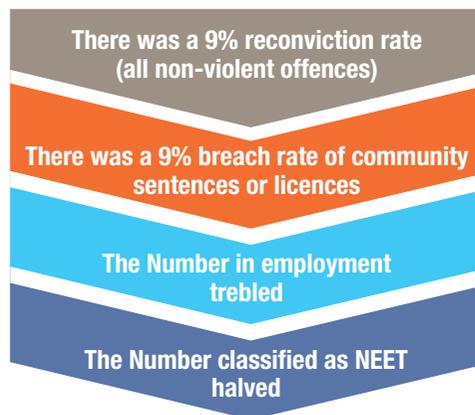
8. See: <http://www.youthcommission.co.uk/>

9. The Howard League's UR Boss campaign includes a focus on engaging young people, including young adults, who have been in contact with the police and criminal justice system. See <http://www.urboss.org.uk/campaigns/police-and-crime-commissioners-campaign>

APPENDIX: THE T2A APPROACH

Since it was established in 2008, T2A has produced more than 40 reports and, since 2009, has run three pilots projects which have tested the T2A approach in different locations and with different cohorts of young people (in West Mercia, Birmingham and London). The T2A pilots worked with more than 1,000 young adults, enabling demonstration of voluntary community interventions alongside probation services, focused managing transition to adulthood from the youth to adult justice system and taking account of developmental maturity. Each project was tailored to the needs of the individual, with the aim of reducing both the risk of reoffending and social exclusion.

A summative evaluation of the pilots published in 2012 found that:



The evaluation concluded that “*the T2A model provides effective support for young adults and helps them in desisting from crime*”. A break-even analysis by Matrix Evidence also showed that the T2A approach is cost-effective in reducing re-offending.¹⁰

THE T2A PATHWAY

In January 2014, T2A launched an innovative three-year national programme to deliver interventions to young adults throughout the criminal justice process in six locations.



10. Formative, cost-benefit and outcomes evaluations were carried out by Oxford University, Matrix Evidence and Catch 22 respectively. The outcomes evaluation is summarised in the appendix to this response and the full evaluation reports results are available at www.t2a.org.uk/publications

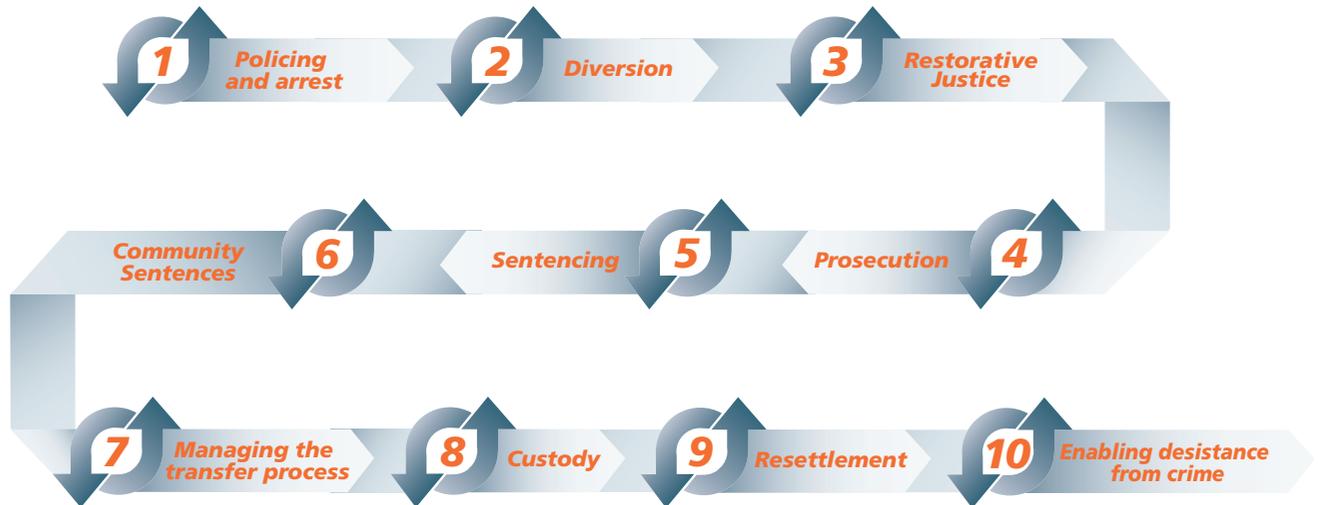


The 'T2A Pathway' will be delivered by partnerships between the voluntary and statutory sectors, as part of the work of the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A). The projects will work with 16-25 year olds at different stages of the criminal justice process (as the diagram below illustrates).

The T2A Pathway projects include provision of:

- mental health support;
- restorative justice;
- drug and alcohol treatment;
- family engagement; and
- help with finding employment.

The T2A Pathway projects include partnerships with the police in London (led by Advance Minerva) and Rotherham (Together for mental health wellbeing), with courts and probation in Liverpool (Addaction) and Sheffield (Remedi), and with five prisons across Staffordshire and the West Midlands (Pact and the Prince's Trust). The projects are co-funded between the Barrow Cadbury Trust and a range of statutory partners, including Police and Crime Commissioners to prisons and local authorities.¹¹



11. For further information on the pathways projects see <http://www.t2a.org.uk/pathway/>

SUMMARY: A CHECKLIST FOR POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

- Consider whether existing local youth diversionary or youth triage schemes could be expanded and developed to include the young adult age group.
- Review the use of out of court disposals, including conditional cautions, for this age group, and consider how they could be used more effectively to divert young adults away from crime.
- Support and expand opportunities for community resolution and restorative justice for young adults pre and post-sentence.
- Conduct a local needs analysis of young adults coming into contact with the police to better inform crime prevention and diversion strategies with partners.
- Work closely with health commissioners, such as the local NHS England Health in the Justice System Team, to ensure that the particular needs of young adults are included in local plans such as the roll out of the all-age mental health liaison and diversion services.
- Working with the Youth Offending Services, probation partners and other relevant non-criminal justice providers to help ensure a smooth transition between youth offending services and adult probation at 18.
- Support employment initiatives locally that include access for young adults with criminal convictions.
- Consider how local Integrated Offender Management (IOM) models and principles could be expanded to young adult offenders, and shaped around their particular needs.
- Encourage the local Criminal Justice Board to review resettlement pathways for young adult offenders, and consider how partners could ensure adequate young adult specific provision for a range of needs locally.
- Review the use of stop and search of young adults.
- Invest in developing a stronger evidence base for improved policing practices for this group, including policing the night-time economy.
- Review training in how police officers respond to young adults and develop modules focused on taking account of developmental maturity.
- Ensure the transition to adulthood process and the young adult age group is specifically included in youth engagement strategies and that the impact of this is regularly reviewed.
- Make a particular effort to engage with young adults in contact with the criminal justice system, both as victims and offenders, and ensure that their experience shapes policy.

CONCLUSION

The T2A Alliance is encouraged by progress made by many PCCs in relation to young adults. Much more could be done, and T2A would like all PCCs to develop specific approaches to young adult (18-24) year olds in contact with the criminal justice system.

To contact T2A to discuss your ideas: 0207 632 9060.



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Download the T2A Alliance's
publications at www.t2a.org.uk

The Barrow Cadbury Trust is an independent charitable foundation, committed to bringing about socially just change. We provide grants to grassroots community groups and campaigns working in deprived communities in the UK, with a focus on Birmingham and the Black Country. We also work with researchers, think tanks and government, often in partnership with other grant-makers, to overcome the structural barriers to a more just and equal society.

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Registered Charity Number: 1115476