

WHY PRIORITISE YOUNG ADULTS?

4 KEY MESSAGES FOR POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS



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ADULTHOOD





The Transition to Adulthood Alliance (www.t2a.org.uk) is a coalition of 12 criminal justice, health and youth organisations, which identifies and promotes more effective ways of working with young adults throughout the criminal justice process. Convened by the Barrow Cadbury Trust (BCT) since 2008, its membership encompasses Addaction, 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 YoungMinds¹.

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Grateful thanks to the young people from the T2A pilots who gave permission for their photographs to be used in this publication.

1. Although the work of the T2A Alliance reflects the views of its membership, this submission should not be seen to represent the policy positions of each individual member organisation.

INTRODUCTION

Young adults (18-24) are only 10% of the population but account for a third of all crime, and are also the most likely group to be a victim of crime. This group will be a vital consideration for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) as they set their local policing priorities and commission services to reduce crime and reoffending. This briefing has been prepared for PCC candidates to explore how they can commission services differently for young adults, and embed a more effective approach to young adult offenders in their local area. It brings together the most recent research and practice to demonstrate what works and how reoffending rates can be reduced while achieving cost benefit.

WE SUGGEST THAT TO ACHIEVE THEIR AIM OF CUTTING CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, PCCs SHOULD:

1 SUPPORT common-sense policing of young adults
Commission services that give police more community based options, and support restorative solutions for young adults.

2 WORK WITH PARTNERS to support diversion where appropriate Link with health and social care agencies to ensure effective diversion, and to tackle the multiple problems of many prolific young adult offenders.

3 TAKE A LEAD in tackling young adult reoffending locally Ensure local partners work together to ensure a smooth transition between youth and adult criminal justice services in order to reduce reoffending, and support a distinct local strategy targeting what works for young adults.

4 ENGAGE with young adults Consult young adults as part of duty to engage with victims. Work to improve relationships between young adults and the police.



WHY PRIORITISE YOUNG ADULTS?

Young adults (18 to 24 year-olds) are disproportionately likely to come into contact with the police. Recent statistics show that²:

208,262

young adults aged 18-20 were arrested by the police for notifiable offences in England and Wales in 2009-10

59,948

18-24 year olds received a Penalty Notice for Disorder in 2010

2,973

18-24 year olds received a conditional caution in 2011

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Young adults are significantly over represented in the criminal justice system. Despite representing just 10% of the population, young adults make up more than one-third of those commencing a community sentence, one-third of the probation service's caseload and almost one-third of those sentenced to prison each year. In most cases, these criminal justice interventions fail to stop further offending: three-quarters of young adults leaving prison are reconvicted within two years, and two-thirds are reconvicted within two years of serving a generic community sentence (T2A, 2012, p. 8).

This crime and reoffending has a substantial impact on communities and police resources. There is clearly a strong case on a volume basis alone for a specific approach for this group. However, young adult offenders also face a distinct set of difficulties.

The T2A Alliance's pilot projects that have worked with this age group since

2009 have identified a **range of needs among young adult offenders**, including poor mental health, low educational attainment and drug and alcohol problems (Catch22, 2012). Furthermore, despite research showing that **the adult brain is not fully mature until at least the mid-twenties**, many public services fail to take levels of maturity into account. As the final report by the independent Riots, Communities and Victims Panel stated (2012, p. 91)

“Justice is a particularly pronounced example of where the nature and type of interventions provided shift quickly at 18, whereas the specific needs of the individual follow a more complex and extended path”.

A number of agencies have begun to take account of this, with the Sentencing Council now including 'lack of maturity' in the sentencing guidelines as a mitigating factor for adults, and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) signalling their intention to provide a specific commissioning strategy for young adult offenders³.

However, too often young adults end up falling through the gaps of community services as they make the transition to adulthood; losing support at a crucial stage in their lives and at a time when they are most likely to come into contact with the police.

Although young adults are the most likely group to commit an offence, they are also the most likely to stop offending if the right approach is taken (T2A, 2012, p.8). The T2A Alliance has developed and piloted a distinct approach to young adults in the criminal justice system, which takes account of varying maturity and is responsive to specific needs. Using an intensive approach and working alongside the police and a range of partners, evaluations have shown the T2A approach to be cost-effective and successful in reducing reoffending (see appendix for more details).

2. House of Commons Hansard (2012), House of Commons Written Answer ('Stop and Search: Young People'), 1 February 2012, Column 692W

3 <http://www.t2a.org.uk/minister-for-justice-noms-to-produce-commissioning-framework-for-young-adults/>

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

T2A has a number of suggestions for Police and Crime Commissioners that will help them to achieve key local priorities such as reducing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour, and reducing the number of victims in their force area. In particular, PCCs should:

1 SUPPORT

THE COMMON-SENSE POLICING OF YOUNG ADULTS

Police officers have a number of options open to them when a crime is detected, including conditional cautions and a variety of rigorous community based and restorative solutions. Receiving a criminal record can be very detrimental to a young person's future, in particular their employment prospects. While punishment is important, a straightforward criminal justice response without other support can create barriers to a young person desisting from crime in the future.

In many instances of anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, as well as some incidents deemed more serious, a community-based solution can be an

effective means of punishing a young offender without using the criminal justice system. While each individual decision is clearly an operational issue to be left to the professionals, PCCs will play an important role in supporting these solutions and commissioning services that expand the viable community options open to the police.

Restorative approaches have proved particularly effective in a number of settings, including youth justice, and PCCs should explore ways to **support and expand restorative solutions for young adults** in their area.

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES involve the offender in making amends to the victim directly for their crime, bringing *“those harmed by crime or conflict and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward”*⁴.

Restorative justice can take place at any stage in the criminal justice process, including pre-arrest and pre-sentence. It has been widely shown to be effective, with reoffending rates reduced by 14% in one piece of research (Shapland et al, 2008). It also has high levels of victim satisfaction, with 85% satisfied in one MOJ survey (Shapland et al, 2007), while a recent poll by found that 88% of the public support restorative justice⁵.

4. http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/what_is_restorative_justice/

5. http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/news/88_of_the_public_support_restorative_justice__new_icmprt_polling_data_/

2 WORK WITH PARTNERS

TO SUPPORT DIVERSION WHERE APPROPRIATE

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Many young adult offenders suffer from a range of problems, and may have lost contact with support in the transition between youth and adult services. Diversion away from the criminal justice system at an early stage where appropriate can help to prevent further offending, while allowing the police to focus on their core role rather than dealing with health and social care problems. PCCs will have an important role in **maintaining partnerships with health and social care services** to ensure effective diversion locally.

The government has already recognised the importance of the link between health and offending, and partnership working between the police and health is being 'hardwired' into the system.

Commissioning for police custody healthcare is being transferred to the NHS, while liaison and diversion services will be rolled out to provide an all-age service to police custody suites nationally by 2014. The services themselves will be commissioned through national offender health structures; however PCCs will have a key role in linking with offender health commissioners to provide a joined-up approach to the diversion of young adults locally, and working with a range of partners to ensure that there are appropriate community services to divert offenders to.

Given the prevalence of health and social care needs among young adult offenders, close links with health services will also be

important more broadly in designing strategies to reduce young adult crime in the community. As an elected representative, PCCs should use their mandate to forge creative partnerships, driving action and collaboration which will enable both safer and healthier communities.

A number of strategies are proving the effectiveness of this approach, with initiatives on gangs and troubled families using multi-agency approaches and sharing resources to jointly tackle multiple problems. Other key partners will include health and wellbeing boards, drug and alcohol services, housing, education and employment services, and the voluntary sector.



3 TAKE A LEAD

IN TACKLING YOUNG ADULT REOFFENDING LOCALLY

The majority of crime is committed by those already known to criminal justice agencies, and PCCs must **tackle the high level of reoffending among young adults** in order to cut crime. PCCs are responsible for the ‘totality of policing in their force area’, covering the policing of both children and young adults, and the transition between. PCCs should use this unique perspective to **take a lead in bringing partners together** to bridge the gap between youth and adult justice, and **design a specific strategy to tackle young adult reoffending**. A specific approach for overseeing youth to adult transitions should form part of the police and crime plan.

As noted above, young adults represent a distinct age group and require a distinct response. PCCs should **map services** that support young adults locally, and **establish what links already exist** between youth and adult criminal justice agencies. They should take a lead locally in addressing the challenge of transitions, and **link closely with Youth Offending Services and Probation**, who will be developing transitions protocols in every local area based on a new framework issued by the Youth Justice Board. (YJB 2012).

Particular approaches that have proved successful in reducing reoffending among young adults include:

- **Integrated Offender Management (IOM)** - provides an effective, locally tailored approach to dealing with priority offenders, many of whom are in the young adult age group (Revolving Doors Agency, 2012).
- **Intensive Alternative to Custody (IAC)** – Provides a credible and effective alternative to custody for offenders who would otherwise receive a short-prison sentence of under 12 months. This approach has been successfully targeted at 18-25 year olds, and evaluations have shown that it both saves money and reduces reoffending (MJW, 2012, p. 6)
- **Positive Futures*** - The replication of prevention programmes like Positive Futures, the current national youth crime prevention programme run by Catch22, could support young adults to stay away from crime and substance misuse. It works with young adults in their communities using invention, innovation and a range of engagement tools so that

their underlying issues can be dealt with. Young people are encouraged to put something back through mentoring and volunteering activities. <http://www.posfutures.org.uk/>

Underlying successful approaches to reducing reoffending among young adults is the recognition that those in the transition to adulthood need tailored support and not an arbitrary cut off from services at a crucial time. Not only can providing this support reduce the damage done to communities by prolific young adult offenders, cost/benefit analysis by Matrix Evidence of the T2A pilots has also shown it to be a more cost-effective approach (see appendix for further details on the T2A approach and evaluation of the pilots).

* Positive Futures: The programme works with over 57,000 young people annually in 91 projects in England and Wales. In 5 years alone the programme has enabled young people to achieve 38,000 recorded qualifications and supported over 2,300 young people to gain employment.

APPENDIX:

THE 'T2A APPROACH' TO REDUCING CRIME AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

The 'T2A approach' builds on the principle that "young people in the transition to adulthood require specific, tailored support through this process of change, and not an arbitrary cut-off from services at the time of greatest need" (Catch 22, 2012, p.2). The Barrow Cadbury Trust supports three pilots across the country, running since 2009, which have proved successful in translating this concept into practice through working intensively with young adults. Reducing reoffending is a core concern of the pilots, and to do this they include personalized, welfare-based approaches, enabling young adults to 'get on with their lives' and desist from offending behaviour.

A summative evaluation of the pilots published in 2012⁶ found that:

- There was a **9% RECONVICTION RATE** (all non-violent offences)
- There was a **9% BREACH RATE OF COMMUNITY SENTENCES** or licences
- The number in **EMPLOYMENT TREBLED**
- The number classified as **NEET HALVED**.

The evaluation concluded that "*the T2A model provides effective support for young adults and helps them in desisting from crime*" (Catch 22 2012, p. 3). A break-even analysis by Matrix Evidence⁷ showed that the T2A approach is cost-effective in reducing re-offending.

THE T2A PATHWAY

This diagram illustrates ten points in the criminal justice process at which professionals can deliver a more effective approach for young people in the transition to adulthood. A detailed chapter focussed on each stage (outlining the evidence base for the T2A approach, with examples of best practice, and case studies demonstrating how the approach is already making a real difference to young adults and their wider communities) can be found in the 2012 T2A report *Pathways from Crime: Ten steps to a more effective approach for young adults in the criminal justice process* at www.t2a.org.uk/pathway



6. Based on a random sample of 34 young adults from across the three T2A pilots tracked over a 6 month period

7. 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 ALLIANCE PROJECTS

Since it was established in 2008, T2A has produced more than 40 reports and, since 2009, three T2A pilots projects have tested the T2A approach in different locations and with different cohorts of young people: In West Mercia, Birmingham and London, delivered by Youth Support Services (YSS), Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust, and the St Giles Trust respectively.



West Mercia T2A



Run by YSS, the project works in the community with young adult offenders with high needs. The project offers a flexible, community based, one-to-one support and mentoring service. YSS has established a multi-agency T2A steering group with senior management representation from across the criminal justice sector, and the T2A project is embedded in regular discourse between the West Mercia Probation Trust and the Youth Offending Team. Key workers are regular visitors at statutory agency team meetings and will often meet up to discuss T2A referrals. The project operates across the West Mercia region, in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford local authority areas. YSS is now the preferred provider for the Probation Trust.

Birmingham T2A



Delivered in Birmingham by the Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust, the project is aimed at young adults aged 17-24 identified as posing a medium risk of reoffending. The project enables interventions to be tailored to the maturity and needs of the individual young adult and offers mentoring, as well as specific help with accommodation, employment, relationships and substance misuse. The project manages the transfer process of all young people moving across from the Youth Offending Service to adult Probation services, and works in the courts to ensure that sentencers are kept informed about community options and alternatives to custody, particularly following breach of an order. The project's transfer protocol has informed the new Youth Justice Board guidance on managing YOS to Probation transitions, which is due for national roll out in 2013. The Probation Trust is now seeking to roll out the pilot project across the whole Trust.

London T2A



Based in Croydon, and led by the St Giles Trust, the project works with young adults in the community and in prison before and after their release. It provides intensive support to divert young adults away from offending and enables them to build a new life for themselves. Support offered includes help with housing, accessing training and employment, as well as emotional support with issues such as relationships, behaviour, self-esteem and self-perception. The service is delivered by trained key workers who are all ex-offenders, which ensures a level of trust and credibility. The London T2A project works alongside local police, youth offending teams and probation service, who make direct referrals. Croydon Probation has now established a dedicated young adult service, and St Giles Trust has established the T2A approach in several new boroughs, including a cross-borough project in Brent and Westminster.

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CONTACT T2A

The T2A Alliance is keen to engage and support PCCs by providing information and evidence about what works.

To find out more about the T2A approach, or to meet with representatives from the T2A Alliance, please contact:

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