

## Health and Wellbeing Board

31 January 2017



### County Durham Youth Offending Service Speech, Language and Communication Needs Strategy

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### Report of Gill Eshelby, Strategic Manager, County Durham Youth Offending Service, Durham County Council

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#### Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update members of the Health and Wellbeing Board on the progress and outcomes of County Durham Youth Offending Service (CDYOS) Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Strategy.
- 2 The report presents the impact of the strategy, including identification of considerable unmet needs among young people in the youth justice system in County Durham, and makes recommendations for the wider system.
- 3 A presentation will be provided to the Board on 31 January 2017.

#### Background

- 4 National research suggests that 60-90% of young people who offend have speech, language and communication needs (*'Nobody Made the Connection: The prevalence of neuro-disability in young people who offend'*, Children's Commissioner, University of Exeter and University of Birmingham, October 2012). This research was the catalyst for CDYOS work on SLCN.
- 5 CDYOS implemented its comprehensive SLCN Strategy in March 2014. Phase 1 took place March – September 2014; Phase 2 September 2014 – March 2015. Phase 3 commenced April 2015, initially until March 2017; it is currently being extended until March 2018.
- 6 Work to date has been funded by a range of sources: Phase 1 by CDYOS partnership budget/non-recurrent North Durham (ND) Clinical Commissioning Group funding (CCG) funding; Phase 2 by CDYOS/ Office of the Police Crime and Victims Commissioner (OPCVC); Phase 3 by CDYOS / North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT).

#### Summary of Phase 1

- 7 Phase 1 built staff capacity and capability (all staff trained in SLCN awareness); created a SLCN Champions group (staff successfully completed accredited Elkan training); started to develop (with the help of young people) an extensive

range of communication friendly resources for young people who offend; and enabled CDYOS to implement the Youth Justice Board (YJB) AssetPlus (new national youth justice assessment for all young people in the youth justice system) SLCN screen in July 2014 (a year ahead of schedule).

- 8 The seconded Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) worked with CDYOS staff and young people to develop the young people's SLCN screening tool to complement the YJB AssetPlus screen – unique to CDYOS. 89% of staff reported the training they received transformed their work with young people.

## **Summary of Phase 2**

- 9 Phase 2 focused on the communication needs of young victims of youth crime. It helped CDYOS to 'unpick' the language of restorative justice and make the process communication and young people friendly. It developed a range of resources for young victims of youth crime (with the help of young people who had been victims) to help them (and their parents/carers) better understand and engage in restorative justice processes. This has played an important role improving outcomes for young victims, supporting the healing process.

## **Summary of Phase 3 (to date)**

- 10 The Speech and Language Therapist is currently full time in CDYOS, funded by CDYOS (75%) and NTHFT (25%).
- 11 Phase 3 is focusing on:
  - Providing specialist SLT assessments for all those young people who require them;
  - Providing specialist SLT intervention in CDYOS for those young people who require it;
  - Supporting case managers to adjust their practice following specialist assessment, if the young person does not require specialist intervention;
  - Developing and implementing a robust pathway into mainstream SLT services for young people who offend and young victims;
  - Leading further service development, both in CDYOS and NTHFT, to improve outcomes for young people in the youth justice system;
  - Building the capacity and capability of staff in NTHFT to work with CDYOS client group;
  - Analysing the communication needs of young people known to CDYOS to inform future commissioning.
- 12 The national implementation of AssetPlus across all Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), which makes SLCN screening of all young people who offend mandatory, will present mainstream SLT services with major challenges as they are not used to (or trained in) working with the Youth Offending Service (YOS) client group. If, as national research suggests, 60-90% of young people in the youth justice system have speech language and communication needs, this will result in a significant increase in referrals to mainstream services of a new, and very challenging client group. CDYOS SLCN Strategy and partnership work is

therefore of national significance, and the service is regarded as one of the national leaders in this important area of work.

- 13 CDYOS SLCN Strategy has significant implications for the whole system and for the commissioning of SLCN services in general. As a result of work to date, CDYOS is identifying young people with complex SLCN whose needs have not been identified by mainstream services prior to their involvement in the youth justice system. There is an evident under- provision of SLCN resources, and staff awareness of SLCN, in mainstream services.

### **Impact and Outcomes/Progress Update (1 May 2015 – 9 Dec 2016)**

- 14 122 young people (aged 10 years 1 month to 18 years 3 months) have been referred (May 2015 – 9 December 2016) for SLT assessment following screening by CDYOS case managers, evidencing need and impact of work to date. 112 young people have been referred to our seconded SLT; 10 to core service.
- 15 The number of referrals and the unmet needs of CDYOS client group are staggering. Assessments indicate a range of very complex SLCN – often of older young people – which have not been identified by mainstream services, prior to involvement in the youth justice system.
- 16 98 young people (80%) of the 122 have had no previous involvement with SLT services, despite complex SLCN, which have not been identified by mainstream services. 24 young people (21%) have previously been known to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). 26 (23%) are currently known to CAMHS. 42 (37.5%) are known to have been excluded from school.
- 17 Lack of early identification and intervention is a significant issue for all staff working with children and young people, commissioners, the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Families Partnership and partners.
- 18 Initially (May 2015 – end Sept 2016) all young people requiring specialist SLT assessment were referred to our seconded SLT (average 6 referrals per month). Due to capacity, the pathway was revised. Since 1 October, post court cases are referred to CDYOS SLT; pre/out of court to core SLT service.
- 19 Due to numbers and capacity, the following young people have been identified as priorities by the SLCN steering group:
  - Those with a pending court case (defendant or witness);
  - Those with a pending Referral Panel meeting;
  - Those undergoing an Education Health and Care Plan assessment;
  - Those sentenced to custody/ remanded to youth detention accommodation;
  - Those aged 17 plus;
  - Those needing Social Communication Assessment Team Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnostic assessment;
  - Those at risk of serious self-harm due to mental health needs.

- 20 Interventions to date have included direct therapy from our Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) and direct support/advice to young people to help them to understand the youth justice system. Interventions include: vocabulary; social communication; Dysfluency support; advice to panel for Referral Order contract; Police bail advice report; liaison with solicitors re Crown Court appearance; witness support liaison re Registered Intermediary; joint YOS intervention (peer relationships and breach process); advice for parents; and joint work with other services (e.g. wider Children's Services, Education, schools).
- 21 Approximately 100 other young people with identified SLCN are being appropriately managed by CDYOS case managers. This includes the use of our communication friendly resources, and the direct impact of the capacity and capability building in Phase 1. Our SLCN Strategy has transformed service delivery.
- 22 Key unique elements of CDYOS SLT service are: assertive outreach and development of specialist resources to enable young people with SLCN to better understand and engage in youth justice processes. Nationally there is a lack of adequate communication friendly resources for young people who offend, so a key part of the service has been the development of resources providing appropriate specialist intervention in a youth justice context for young people.
- 23 A robust Youth Justice SLT Pathway has been developed and implemented, covering referral, assessment and post assessment pathway. This is subject to on-going review.
- 24 Academic evaluation of Phase 3 via Northumbria University commenced late 2015. CDYOS is working with a PhD student (with a public health background) for the next 5 years to evaluate our SLT service delivery model.

### **ClearCut Communication**

- 25 A wide range of unique communication friendly resources for young people who offend and young victims have been developed. Initially for CDYOS use, interest from other YOTs resulted in the decision to produce these commercially, copyright them to Durham County Council, brand them ClearCut Communication and market them to the youth justice sector. All income from ClearCut Communication is used by CDYOS to improve outcomes for young people who offend and young victims of youth crime in Co. Durham.
- 26 ClearCut Communication resources to date include:
  - Young person's version of the AssetPlus SLCN screen, toolkit and Train the Trainers pack/training (unique resource);
  - Wordbuster (83 youth justice words);
  - Telling Your Story;
  - Youth Caution in communication friendly language (approved by Durham Constabulary Solicitors);

- Going to Court booklets (with support of HM Court and Tribunal Service);
  - Reparation leaflet
  - Thinking about Victims (supported by the OPCVC)
  - Referral Order resources.
- 27 ClearCut resources are being purchased by other YOTs nationally and are being used by all CDYOS staff. Feedback from young people, parents/carers, CDYOS partners and staff is very positive. Many of these resources are transferable to the wider system. Work with the OPCVC and RJ Coordinator to raise awareness of SLCN, and impact on adults' ability to understand/engage in restorative processes, will commence early 2017.

### **Risks to Future Delivery**

- 28 A major risk to this important work is funding after March 2018. CDYOS is currently in negotiation to mainstream the work from April 2018.

### **Regional and National Developments**

- 29 CDYOS SLT has established and chairs a regional peer supervision group for SLTs working in YOTs and youth justice secure estate across the North East.
- 30 CDYOS work is arousing significant national interest. To date CDYOS has:
- Had an article on our work published in Afaisic News (May 2015);
  - Given a range of presentations e.g. to the youth justice sector, health partners, CEN network, Early Help forums, LSCB Early Help & Neglect subgroup;
  - Met with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists;
  - Given evidence to the APPG on young people and communication difficulties in the House of Commons (Oct 2015). The Chair, Lord Ramsbotham, and members commended our work. We were the only YOS in the country invited to give evidence;
  - Showcased ClearCut Communication at the YJ Convention (Nov 2015)
  - Led a workshop at the YJ Convention and launched our new Victims resource (Nov 2016);
  - Provided awareness training to a range of partners regionally and nationally;
  - Visit by Lord McNally (Chair of the YJB) and Colin Allars (Chief Exec) Sept 2016.

### **National Recognition**

- 31 CDYOS SLCN Strategy has received national recognition. It was awarded 'Highly Commended' Innovation Award in the national Shine a Light Awards 2015; and was a finalist in the Children and Young People Now Awards 2015.

32 The two members of staff were awarded a Butler Trust Award 2015/16 – one of only 10 in the UK, and the only YOS in the country – in recognition of their work. This is a significant achievement. This prestigious award was presented by HRH The Princess Royal at Saint James's Palace in March.

## **Conclusion**

33 CDYOS SLCN Strategy has significant implications for the whole system and the commissioning of SLCN services in general. CDYOS is identifying significant numbers of young people (many of them older) with complex SLCN, whose needs have not been identified or addressed by mainstream services prior to their involvement in the youth justice system.

34 There is an evident under-provision of SLCN resources, and staff awareness of SLCN, in mainstream services. This is a significant issue for partners, commissioners and the system as a whole.

35 Implications to be considered include:

- Early identification of SLCN and appropriate intervention;
- Building workforce capacity and capability to recognise SLCN;
- Links between SLCN, behaviour and exclusion;
- Links between SLCN and CAMHS.

## **Recommendations**

36 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- Note the content of this report.
- Agree to receive further updates in due course.
- Refer CDYOS SLCN Strategy to the Healthy Child Programme Board to inform future developments and consider commissioners' implications.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – Funding to mainstream this important area of work needs to be secured via commissioning.

**Staffing** – The Strategy has identified the need to build capacity and capability to recognise SLCN and meet the needs of children and young people by early identification and intervention.

**Risk** – SLCN and poor communication impact on a range of outcomes: educational achievement, employability, behaviour/vulnerability, criminality/offending, mental health and disadvantage

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – SLCN is an equality issue and should be recognised as such. It is often a hidden disability.

**Accommodation** – Not applicable

**Crime and Disorder** – The Taylor Review of the Youth Justice System (12 December 2016) highlights the major role health/SLCN has in youth offending

**Human Rights** – Young people in the youth justice system, and their parents/carers, have a right to understand legal processes and language used.

**Consultation** – Young people who offend and their parents/carers; young victims of crime and their parents/carers have been consulted in the development and implementation of CDYOS SLCN Strategy

**Procurement** – This work needs to inform future commissioning

**Disability Issues** – Reasonable adjustments need to be made for young people with SLCN. This is often a hidden disability.

**Legal Implications** – Much of the youth justice system, particularly court and police processes, are indecipherable to young people and their families. This has legal implications for sentencers.