

# Targeted youth support

Integrated support for vulnerable young people – emerging practice



## Voluntary sector leads multi-agency team to combat substance misuse

Area: Leeds; Yorkshire; population approximately 750,000

“Our role is not to replace statutory services; our role is to support them so they can get on with their jobs. We work as part of a multi-agency team to help identify vulnerable young people, to bring them into our service so that other agencies have a place to access them and then use their expertise to help them” – **Karen Craig, area manager, CRI, April 2008**

### Challenges

- Information sharing across different agencies
- Dealing with young people with complex issues who are often out of touch of statutory services

### Key Actions

- Voluntary sector provider CRI won tender through the council's Safer Leeds Partnership in 2005
- Since then set up tier three service for young people 10 – 19 with substance misuse/associated needs – some self refer, others through social services, GPs, youth offending service etc
- Active outreach programme targeting vulnerable young people such as young street drinkers
- Work with young people on drugs and related issues such as mental health, medical and concerns around suicide
- Assessment based on the common assessment framework (CAF) carried out- something all agencies can relate to
- Other agencies brought in as needed e.g. community and mental health, supported housing, counselling etc once trust developed with the young person
- CRI holds multi-agency meetings, bringing together agencies a young person is involved with, those they will benefit from and co-ordinates appointments for the young people with key practitioners
- Cognitive work is linked to a young person's motivations – this is then fed into a variety of diversionary activities
- Exit plan developed for post 19s to ease transition into adult services – CRI remain involved for three months
- Progress for each young person is reviewed monthly and provision re-aligned if necessary

### Key Implementation Tips

- **Don't look at drug use in isolation – work must be done in relation to the rest of the young people's lives**  
**Be flexible and creative in the services you offer and the times you offer them**
- **Recognise that the young people you are dealing with have chaotic lives, won't keep lots of appointments and work around them accordingly**
- **Involve young people in staff interviews – it gives them a sense of ownership**
- **Don't look at a young person as a problem just with problems**
- **Raise awareness of the service to practitioners through for example involvement in training events and to young people**
- **Take the first possible opportunity to get agencies round the table**
- **Understand the language and priorities of each agency you work with and respond to them accordingly**

### Impact

The CRI T3 project works with approximately 140 of the most vulnerable and hard to reach young people in Leeds each year. The provision of a combination of community support and structured treatment services works to address behavioural issues, while breaking down the barriers that have previously inhibited the take up of statutory services. This helps to get young people back on track and back in touch with mainstream services with the overall aim of reducing youth offending and making communities in Leeds safer.

The project's reputation is growing in the city with many vulnerable young people now self referring having found out about it from a friend or family member who has been helped. Also many young people refer themselves back to the project if on leaving they relapse and begin to drink or abuse substances again. This continued support has helped many young people who otherwise on leaving might have slipped out of site of statutory services. The project's ability to build up trust with the young people and the help identifying and putting them in touch with a range of other services to meet their needs is also invaluable.

### To find out more, contact

Karen Craig; 07711 087732 [kcraig@crinet.co.uk](mailto:kcraig@crinet.co.uk)

For more emerging practice case studies log on to: [www.ecm.gov.uk/deliveringservices/tysemergingpractice](http://www.ecm.gov.uk/deliveringservices/tysemergingpractice)