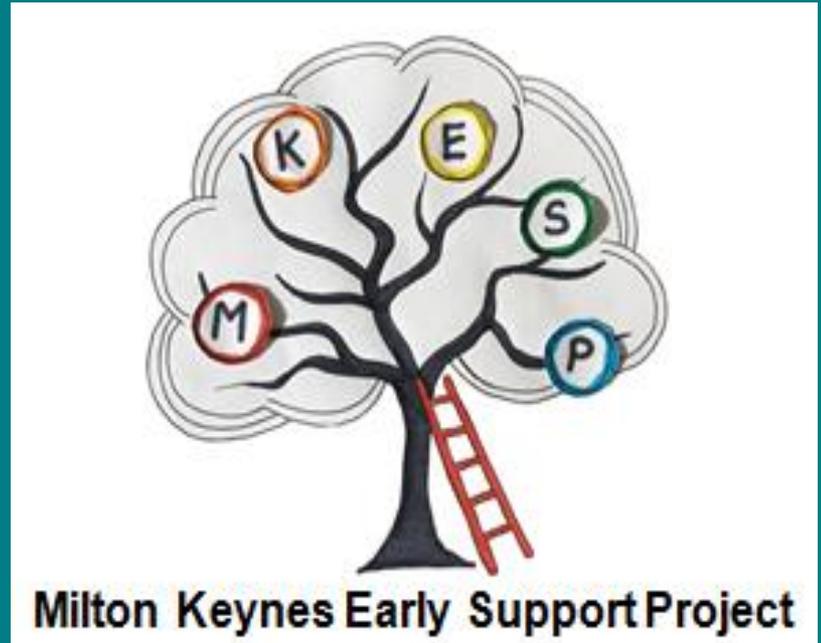


Milton Keynes Early Support Project (ESP)

Youth Diversion and Prevention Service



Diz Minnitt – YOT Manager / Strategic Lead for Exploitation

What is the Early Support Project?

- The Early Support Project is a Youth Diversion and Prevention Service.
- We have a **strong health and education focus**, including offering **Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)** assessments to all young people.
- The **Diversion** aspect of the service offers voluntary support to young people receiving Community Resolutions, including the recently introduced Drug Diversion Service (DDS). This element of the service focuses on diverting young people from the formal Youth Justice System upon the delivery of an informal Out-of-Court disposal.
- The **Prevention** element of the service offers Social Care, Early Help and local partnerships access to the project where there are considerable offending / anti-social behaviour / serious youth violence / county lines / criminal exploitation concerns. This aspect of the service aims to prevent young people receiving any formal or informal disposal by addressing needs and risks at the very earliest opportunity.
- Within our Prevention offer, we have a **SLCN project operating within primary and secondary schools**. We offer SLCN assessments to those students assessed by their settings as being at the greatest risk of school exclusion or managed moves to alternative provisions.

Recognised as Being Best Practice

The YOT and ESP was inspected in May 2021 and we received an overall rating of **'Good.'**

Milton Keynes YOT were inspected in October 2019 as part of the wider **Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)** which had a specific focus on the emotional and mental wellbeing of young people. The Inspectorate commended the work of early intervention within the YOT.

NHS England have also recognised the Early Support Project as being a model of effective practice.

"This project [ESP and PRRE] has contributed towards a 24% reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system which is an impressive and a significant achievement"

(JTAI, 2019)

"The ESP within the YOT has proven to be particularly effective and is an example of good practice"

(JTAI, 2019)

MK

milton keynes council

Our Performance So Far

- Our offending rate is **3.6%**
- Our First Time Entrants (FTE) rate is **138 per 100,000**. This compares to the national average of 208 per 100,000

Early Support Project: Our Approach

- We offer an 'opt out' service – we make contact with all young people considered appropriate for the service.
- We use a consistent approach within the Early Support Project whereby we; screen, triage, assess, plan, review and signpost all young people.
- Keeping others safe, keeping the young person safe and supporting young people to build on the factors that will support them to avoid crime is key within our work, to ultimately enable young people to have successful and positive futures
- We are child-led, and utilise strengths-based and future-focused approaches throughout the service; starting with screening and assessment, and then integrated thereafter within planning, direct work and staff supervision

Understanding the Young Person

- We use our understanding of trauma and adverse childhood experiences to explore behaviour and how it impacts on the young person, their desistance, risk to others and their own safety and wellbeing.
- Understanding attachment behaviour helps us explore how young people get their needs met (which may include offending in order to meet these needs).
- We understand the links between school absence, serious youth violence, exploitation and the persistence of offending into later life.
- We understand how unrecognised SLCN can have a significant impact on a young person's education and future life opportunities if not recognised early.
- We understand that to safeguard children and young people, a contextual safeguarding approach is often needed.

Accessing the Service

Diversion Referral Pathways

- **Thames Valley Police** - following a Community Resolution being given
- **Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDP)** - hosted by Thames Valley Police in partnership with MKYOT, Children's Social Care and CAMHS
- **Drugs Diversion Scheme** –hosted by Thames Valley Police following a Community Resolution being given for drugs possession

Prevention Referral Pathways

- **Children's Social Care** including the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**
- **Children and Families Practices (Early Help)**
- **Missing and Exploitation Panel (MEP)**
- **Strategic Exploitation Panel (SEP)**
- **MK Youth Risk Meeting**
- Referrals from participating schools and colleges on our **SLT project in primary, secondary and further education settings**
- Referrals from **parents** for siblings known / open to YOT
- **Alternative Education Panel**
- **Channel Panel**

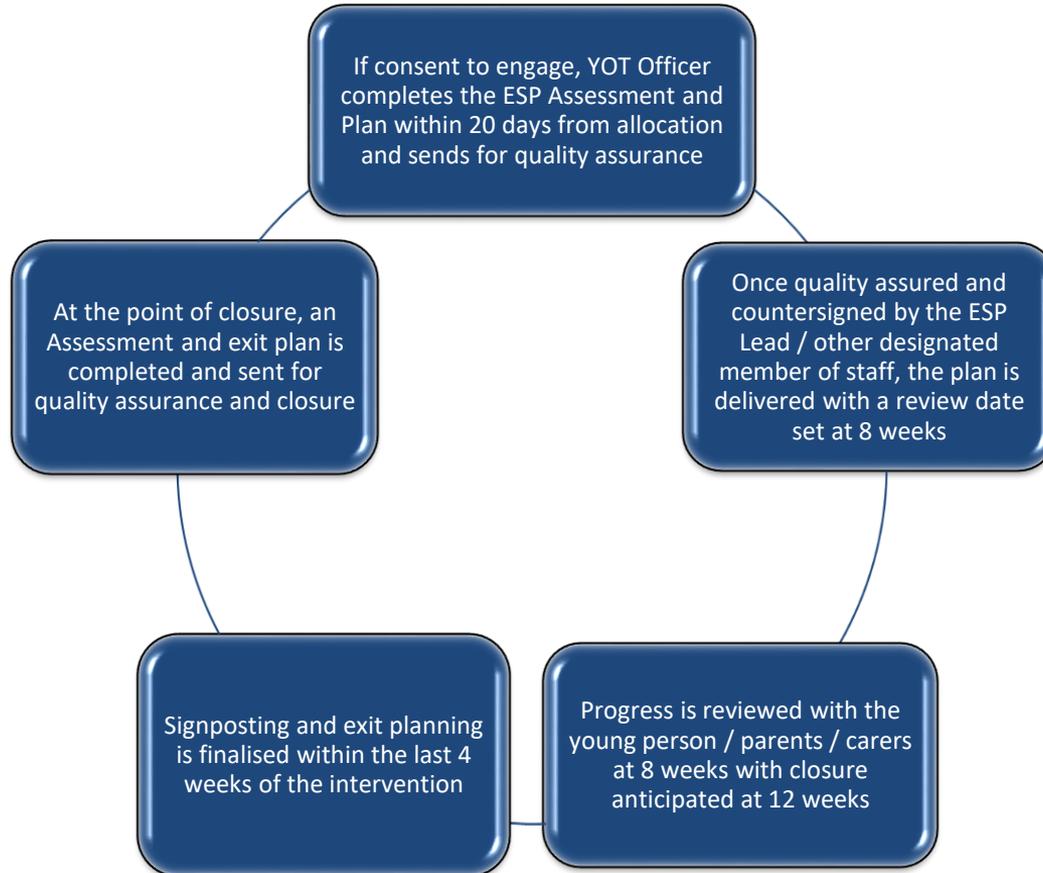
Screening and Triage Process

YOT1 / referral received by Business Support and sent to ESP Lead

ESP Lead allocates the referral for a ESP Initial Screening Assessment to gather information from other agencies

Once completed, ESP Lead reviews all Screening Assessments and a management decision is made about whether to offer intervention dependant on scoring matrix and information

Assessment, Planning, Reviewing and Signposting



Interventions We Offer

- Offending-behaviour work (dependent on behaviour / risks and needs)
- Victim-awareness work including restorative justice opportunities if appropriate
- Work around gang membership / serious youth violence / knife and weapon crime
- Work around child exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery
- Substance misuse work
- Mindfulness
- Consequential thinking work
- Problem-solving work
- Self-esteem and self-confidence work
- Emotional regulation work
- Working around education, training and employment
- Constructive activities via Youth:MK
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) assessments
- Parenting support (1-2-1 or group programmes)
- YIS counselling
- Advocacy for young people and families
- Signposting to voluntary organisations, such as, Kooth online counselling and SOFEA.

Partnership Working

The Youth Offending Service now includes the core team, as well as the Stay Safe team (Youth:MK), Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (YPDAS) and the Missing and Exploitation Hub (MEH).

The Early Support Project works with a wide range of agencies and organisations in order to prevent children and young people offending, and to support children, young people and their families to build bright futures.

Our partnership working includes;

- Police
- Children's Social Care
- Children and Families Practices (Early Help)
- SEND Team
- Community Paediatric Service
- Youth Information, Advice and Guidance Team (IAG)
- Youth:MK
- YPDAS
- Voluntary organisations such as YIS
- Primary and Secondary Schools
- Further education providers
- Health
- Specialist Speech and Language Services
- ICash (sexual health services)
- Specialist CAMHS and Forensic CAMHS

A black and white photograph of a stage. A bright, circular spotlight illuminates a section of the dark floor, creating a strong contrast with the surrounding shadows. The light from the spotlight fades into the dark background, highlighting the texture of the floor.

**Why we keep SLCN and Education
in the spotlight?**

What we have found...

Local YOT data collected over 10 years indicates that **65% of young people that offend have Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and of these, 20% have severe difficulties.**

Local YOT data suggests that **of the 65% identified with SLCN, the majority are only formally recognised at the point that they begin working with the Youth Offending Team, with between 61% - 79% of these needs being previously unrecognised.**

In 2019 / 2020

Of 80 young people assessed for SLCN, **80%** had identified SLCN

In 2020 / 2021

Of 97 young people assessed for SLCN, **84%** had identified SLCN

How do SLCN assessments support young people?

- Provides a window into a young person's world which may lead to subsequent recognition and an understanding of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, or other underlying needs not yet recognised.
- Enables others to make reasonable adjustments to the services they are providing to best meet the needs of young people.
- Contributes to assessing the underpinnings of behaviour.
- Highlights areas of difficulty that others may not have identified.
- Enables others to place behaviour within context.
- Provides recommendations that may be useful to Police Officers, Defence Solicitors, Court staff, Education staff, Health staff, Social Care, SEND.
- Highlights areas of strength that others may not have identified.

Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions (PRRE)

- The PRRE project sits under our Prevention offer.
- The PRRE project offers primary, secondary and further education settings in Milton Keynes, free Speech and Language Therapy provision in order to identify any additional needs for those young people identified by the school as being at the greatest risk of school exclusions and managed moves to alternative provisions.
- Our model involves offering assessments to settings and building on staff knowledge and confidence to address SLCN via free SLCN training which is delivered by our Speech and Language Therapists and Senior Educational Psychologist who is attached to Milton Keynes YOT.
- Following the completion of a referral form, we undertake a comprehensive Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) assessment using a range of formal and inform assessments. A full assessment report is provided to the education setting and further consultation often takes place between school staff and a Speech and Language Therapist. The report details a summary of need and suggest recommendations and resources to school staff.
- We also offer participating provisions free SLCN training in order to support and upskill school staff so that they can adapt their teaching to support children differently and more effectively within a classroom environment.

Ben – Case Study

Ben (age17) at college

- Moderate risk of exclusion. Concerns about low-level disruption and lack of engagement.
- Easily distracted and influenced by others and also distracts other students.
- Moderate - severe SLCN identified. Main problems: listening comprehension and understanding of vocabulary significantly below average. Stammer.

Impact of project:

- College staff previously unaware of his comprehension level, but felt this explained, in part, his lack of engagement.
- College staff to assess academic levels further and complete a holistic profile to compare to his SLCN and then determine appropriate support for his course and exams.
- Additional 1:1 support to be offered to talk about careers and realistic plans for the future.
- Referred to Specialist SLT for advice on stammering and he has engaged with this.

Secondary PRRE: Our Performance So Far

- **21.42%** of the students that had a SLCN assessment had a reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions they received from their referral date to 31.03.2020.
- One student in particular had a significant reduction in fixed term exclusions after accessing the project, with the amount of exclusions **reducing from 11 to 1**.
- The local authority data suggests that there were **3 managed moves to an alternative provision out of the 41 young people**.
- Our evaluation in 2019 also indicated that **64.28%** of the students that had a SLCN assessment did not receive a further fixed school exclusion.
- Only **7.14%** of the students assessed for SLCN went on to receive a further fixed term exclusion.

Primary PRRE: Summary of Initial Findings

- **Primary PRRE 2021 Evaluation** is currently in progress by our Independent Researcher. However, we have some preliminary findings from our baseline questionnaires to schools;
- 4 of 9 primary schools involved in the project responded to the baseline questionnaire. They were asked to identify the challenges they faced in implementing their behaviour policy consistently for children with SLCN. Some schools identified challenges presented by the school staff; others mentioned challenges presented by pupils.
- School staff challenges included maintaining the consistency of the messages being delivered to students by staff and influencing the staff 'mindset' – some staff were intent on 'controlling' behaviour, rather than making reasonable adjustments to the behaviour policy to accommodate individual pupils' needs. One school identified the staff's limited understanding of SLCN as a challenge.
- Challenges presented by pupils included the perception by the whole peer group of 'unfairness' when reasonable adjustments were made to the behaviour policy for some pupils . One school mentioned specifically the difficulty children with SLCN have in dealing with 'grey areas' – both in not understanding reasonable adjustments for others, and in coping with the varying approaches of school staff.



Thank you