



PCC Spotlight 4

Earlier intervention & prevention

By Shane Britton



PCC spotlight: Earlier intervention & prevention

Through our First Generation Project, Revolving Doors Agency and the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A) aim to show how Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) across the country can help to cut crime, end 'revolving door' offending, and improve responses to young adults and people with multiple needs who come into repeated contact with the police.

This is the fourth in our series of PCC spotlights, highlighting promising work among PCCs on key issues. We aim to share examples of promising approaches, and inform the future development of the PCC role.

Introduction: working in partnership to reduce demand

In an era of falling public spending, prevention and early intervention are a growing focus for policymakers. With significant cuts to policing budgets in recent years, police leaders in particular have needed to think about how they can move 'upstream' to reduce demand. As the recent HMIC report *Reshaping Policing for the Public* states:ⁱ

"The police service must place as much emphasis on preventing crime as it does on responding to and investigating crime once it has happened. Managing the demand for services more effectively must be an important goal in coming years."

A strong case has been made for a preventative focus on young people and young adults, with organisations such as the Early Intervention Foundation calling for greater investment in early years and youth services,ⁱⁱ and the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A) demonstrating the case for a distinct approach to divert young adults (18-25) away from a life of crime.ⁱⁱⁱ

Given the significant health and social care needs of many of those coming into contact with the police, intervening earlier with vulnerable adults who are at risk is also key. Relatively small numbers of individuals with

complex needs place high levels of repeat demand on the police,^{iv} and a significant amount of police time is spent responding to vulnerable people who have fallen through the gaps of community and health services:

- **84 %** of all control room calls relate to 'non-crime incidents', often linked to issues of vulnerability, public protection and safeguarding^v
- Mental health related incidents account for an estimated **20%-40%** of police time.^{vi}

Partnership working is crucial to addressing these challenges. However, too often local services are not structured to work in a preventative way – operating in silos which focus on one problem at a time, with funding to treat and respond to issues once they have escalated rather than intervene early.

With a responsibility to reduce crime and protect police budgets, police and crime commissioners (PCCs) have an interest in showing leadership on this agenda locally. This briefing highlights examples of promising practice from number of PCC areas, and draws together some key lessons from their approaches.

Lancashire PCC – Public Service Lancashire

Lancashire PCC Clive Grunshaw has identified early intervention as a key priority, aiming to “transform public services through a fundamental reappraising of how we deliver services, particularly investing in prevention” In 2012, Lancashire was identified as one of two PCC areas selected as an Early Intervention Pioneering Place.^{vii}

To make early intervention a reality, the PCC created ‘Public Service Lancashire’ with local authority; health; and voluntary sector partners. This brings agencies together to invest in programmes that will provide mutual benefit, improving outcomes for vulnerable people through shared priorities, joint planning, better data sharing, and the opportunity to pool budgets.

The goal of this partnership working is service transformation - shifting from a costly model whereby a range of services respond to problems in isolation to a situation where public services across Lancashire work together more effectively and intervene earlier.

Initiatives supported within this framework so far include:

- **The Early Action Response Team –** Together with Lancashire County Council, the Constabulary and the PCC have invested a joint £6 million establishing multi-agency early action response teams, including police; social workers; approved mental health workers; youth workers; and family support workers. They work with a wide range of vulnerable people who are considered ‘at risk’, including high-frequency users of police and health services, developing person-centred solutions in order to respond effectively before their problems escalate to crisis point. A cost-benefit evaluation of the approach will be produced after two years.

- **Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) project –** Along with the director of public health, the PCC has provided match-funding to the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) project in Blackburn, working with homeless people and residents of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) who face multiple and complex needs. Individuals in this group have been identified as at a high risk of offending, with 22% of shoplifting in Blackburn town centre estimated to be linked to those in HMOs. The service provides bespoke one-to-one support to coordinate a more effective response to their multiple needs, and prevent repeat unplanned demand on emergency services and police.

- **AVERT programme -** Lancashire Women’s Centre were funded to provide the AVERT programme, which places female caseworkers in police custody and diverts women into support either voluntarily or via a conditional caution. The service accepts both persistent and low-level offenders, offering a tailored 12-week package of support with the aim of intervening earlier and preventing offending from escalating. An interim evaluation found that in the early stages, 93% of those who completed the course had not re-offended.^{viii}

With an additional £2.2 million from the Home Office Innovation Fund in 2015/16,^{ix} and significant investment from key partners locally, this represents a wide-ranging and ambitious programme to transform responses for vulnerable people in Lancashire.

South Wales PCC: Policing and public health

South Wales PCC Alun Michael has championed a “public health approach” to prevention,^x working closely with health partners and improving multi-agency collection and sharing of data to move ‘up-stream’ in responding to crime and antisocial behaviour.

A public health policy lead has been appointed to the PCC office, leading on projects around violence reduction and liaising with health agencies. More recently, a memorandum of understanding has also been agreed between the PCC, police force, and Public Health Wales, with a Collaborative Strategic Group established which places a strong emphasis on early intervention.^{xi} This also includes a focus on responding more effectively to those facing a range of overlapping needs, with the agreement stating that:

“there are many underlying causes behind criminal activity and ill health; including mental health issues, substance use, difficult childhoods and poverty. For those requiring intervention from health and criminal justice systems we will work together on holistic solutions to their problems”.

A key focus of this partnership work so far has been to adopt a ‘harm reduction’ approach. For example:

- **The Violent Crime project** the Commissioner has sought to prevent violence using evidence-based approaches. Building on work in Cardiff, they have successfully introduced multiagency data collection and analysis on assaults across the force area, using A&E incidents to improve the identification of hotspots and build a greater understanding of where victims and perpetrators are coming from and which communities are at greatest risk.
- **The night time economy** This work has also led to improved health triage points for those identified as vulnerable in the night time economy, including initiatives such as establishing a ‘help point’ in Swansea which has improved partnership working and reduced demand on the police and local Accident & Emergency. Analysis suggests 70% of those accessing the help point are between 18-24 years old, and around 80% would otherwise have attended A&E.^{xii}

More recently, the team have begun working with public health to develop a new approach for at risk groups. Evidence suggests 14% of the Welsh population have experienced 4 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs),^{xiii} which may include: mental illness; alcohol abuse; domestic violence; drug abuse; verbal abuse; sexual abuse; or incarceration. Given that people in this situation are at significantly higher risk of both becoming involved in crime and facing poor health outcomes, this has been identified as a key focus of preventative partnership work going forward.

Essex PCC: New initiatives and community hubs

In Essex, police and crime commissioner Nick Alston has emphasised working with community partners to support early intervention. This has included a focus on preventing youth crime, and engaging with the Essex Partnership Board on the wider public service reform agenda in Essex.^{xiv} The PCC is also supporting prevention and early intervention projects through a Community Safety Development Fund, including a number of community hubs enabling frontline services to work together and provide more opportunities for people to access support earlier before problems escalate. For example:

- The Jaywick drop-in centre: Jaywick in the most deprived area in England according to the latest indices of multiple deprivation. With high numbers of ex-offenders facing a range of needs, the PCC provided initial funding to support a new outreach and drop in centre in the area. This provides support for ex-offenders across a range of practical issues, including preparing for work interviews, help with any medical issues and other challenges such as finding stable housing.^{xv}

- **Tending mental health hub pilot:** the PCC is joint-funding an innovative mental health hub. Provided by the Tending Citizen's Advice Bureau, the hub carries out holistic assessment and acts as a single point of referral for individual service users and statutory and voluntary sector partners, including GPs and the Police. It provides supported volunteering opportunities for those with mental health issues to gain skills, and aims to intervene earlier and build resilience to prevent people falling into crisis, as well as improving support for those trapped in a 'revolving door' of discharge and readmission to hospital and other secondary mental health services.^{xvi}

Further information on the range of schemes supported by the Community Safety Development Fund is available here:

<http://www.essex.pcc.police.uk/income-and-expenditure/new-initiatives-fund/>

Other areas

- Hertfordshire PCC is working closely with public health; Clinical Commissioning Groups; and local authority partners to pool resources and respond more effectively to demand. This includes recent investment in an adults with complex needs project, targeting better coordinated support for individuals living chaotic lives who have placed high demand on a range of local services.^{xvii}
- Derbyshire PCC has established a specific Crime Prevention Fund, committing £250,000 a year in grants for public sector, community groups and third sector organisations to help deliver the PCC's crime prevention priorities. Current schemes include Frameworks, working with young adults (18-24) with an offending history to prevent a relapse into offending, and the Freedom Community Project offering volunteering opportunities and targeted support to vulnerable people **facing multiple needs at risk of offending.**^{xviii}
- **Bedfordshire PCC** has pledged to “redress the balance between more expensive, reactive services and less costly, preventative services that can lead to better outcomes for Bedfordshire as a whole”, and brought key partners together to provide a strategic focus on this through a local Criminal Justice Demand Reduction Board.
- **Avon and Somerset PCC** uses a detailed police and crime needs assessment process to identify and update priorities in the police and crime plan. The assessment covers wider health and underlying needs linked crime and demand on the police, and in the latest version includes a focus on working with local services to: “maximise their collective capacity and capability to prevent and pro-actively tackle the issues causing the most harm to local communities, particularly through integrated working in priority areas and community and voluntary sector stakeholder engagement”^{xix}.

Conclusion and key themes

Intervening earlier to cut crime and reduce wider demand on the police is a key priority for PCCs across the country, and many other areas beyond those featured here are leading important work on this agenda. However, given that many of the levers for early intervention lie beyond the PCC's specific powers, this requires close partnership working with a range of community services. Key themes identified in our review include:

- **Frontline integration:** Many areas are championing greater integration and colocation of services, including multi-agency teams, encouraging closer partnership working and more effective links into a range of support for vulnerable people. Examples include the Early Action Response Team in Lancashire, and the community hub models supported by Essex PCC and partners which link into support early, before problems escalate.
- **Grant funding for community services:** Many important preventative interventions are provided by small community organisations. PCCs across the country have set aside specific funds similar to the Derbyshire Crime Prevention Fund noted above. These vary in their size and purpose, but can play an important role in supporting innovation and helping to fund crucial work 'upstream' with some of the most vulnerable groups.
- **Understanding demand:** A recent National Audit Office report found that most forces do not have a thorough evidence-based understanding of demand.^{xx} In some areas, such as South Wales and Avon and Somerset, PCCs have sought to address this situation by working closely with key partners such as public health to improve data collection

and analysis. However, there is much further to go in most areas.

- **Responding to repeat demand:** Providing coordinated support for the usually small number of 'revolving door' individuals coming into repeated contact with services is an important way to reduce further, predictable, demand. Hertfordshire and Lancashire PCCs are both joint-funding services that provide intensive and coordinated support for those facing multiple and complex needs and living chaotic lives.^{xxi}
- **Diverting young people & young adults from crime:** Many areas have identified responses to young offenders as key to early intervention, supporting youth triage and other approaches to divert young people away from crime. Some areas are also seeking to move further 'upstream', such as the work underway in South Wales around adverse childhood experiences, while increasingly PCCs are acknowledging the benefits of a distinct approach for young adults (18-25) who create disproportionate demand.^{xxii}
- **Service transformation:** The most ambitious approaches are seeking to transform local services, shifting a situation where service respond to problems in silos to a more preventative and flexible approach that meets people's needs more effectively. The devolution agenda is likely to provide further opportunities for this, with greater powers held locally to pool funds around shared challenges and redesign services
- **Strategic partnerships:** PCCs can help to bring key health and local authority partners together on a preventative agenda, working closely together to joint-commission services for shared benefit and acknowledging the overlapping issues which drive demand across public services.

Further resources

The T2A pathway programme is delivering interventions for young adults (18-25) in six locations across England over three years. Further information available here:

<http://www.t2a.org.uk/pathway/>

Revolving Doors Agency & T2A (2014) *Improving responses to young adults: a 'checklist' for police and crime commissioners.* Available here:

<http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/improving-responses-to-young-adults/>

Revolving Doors Agency (2014) *The Revolving Doors Checklist: How police and crime commissioners can improve responses to offenders with multiple and complex needs.* Available here:

<http://www.revolvingdoors.org.uk/documents/revolving-doorschecklist/>

The College of Policing' 'what works crime reduction toolkit' is available here:

<http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx>

HMIC (2015) *Reshaping policing for the public: A discussion paper from the advisory group on the national debate on policing in austerity.* Available here:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/reshaping-policing-for-the-public.pdf>

College of Policing (2015) *Estimating demand on the police service* Available here:

[http://www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Documents/Demand%20Report%2023_1_15_noBleed.pdf](http://www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Documents/Demand%20Report%202023_1_15_noBleed.pdf)

Early Intervention Foundation (2015) *Early Intervention: A guide for frontline police officers and PCSOs* Available here:

<http://www.eif.org.uk/early-intervention-a-guide-for-frontline-police-officers-and-pcsos-3/>

Early Intervention Foundation (2015) *Spending on Late Intervention: How we can do better for less* Available here:

<http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/spending-on-late-intervention-how-we-can-do-better-for-less/>

Revolving Doors Agency is a charity and social enterprise working to change systems and improve services for people who face multiple and complex needs, including poor mental health, and come into repeated contact with the criminal justice system. For more about our work and our consultancy services, see: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk>

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 (18-24) throughout the criminal justice process. For more information see: <http://www.t2a.org.uk/>

For further information on this briefing, or if you would like to share any examples of promising practice in your area, please contact:

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Endnotes

- ⁱ HMIC (2015) *Reshaping policing for the public: A discussion paper from the advisory group on the national debate on policing in austerity*. P. 23
- ⁱⁱ See <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/spending-on-late-intervention-how-we-can-do-better-for-less/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ See www.t2a.org.uk
- ^{iv} See Revolving Doors Agency & T2A (2015) *PCC Spotlight 2: Mental Health* London: Revolving Doors Agency. Available here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/pcc-spotlight-mental-health/>
- ^v College of Policing (2015) *Estimating demand on the police service*, p. 16.
- ^{vi} House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2015) *Mental Health and Policing*, p. 8
- ^{vii} See <http://www.eif.org.uk/pioneering-place/lancashire/>
- ^{viii} McGowan, B. & Sapouna, M. (2014) AN INTERIM EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT: AVERT.
- ^{ix} See <http://www.lancashire-pcc.gov.uk/News-and-Events/News-archive/2015/2.2mHomeOfficeInnovationBid.aspx>
- ^x Alun Michael 'Harm reduction: using a public health approach to tackling crime' in Chambers, M. (2013) *The Pioneers Police and Crime Commissioners, one year on*, pp. 36-44.
- ^{xi} See <http://www.south-wales.police.uk/en/news/commitment-to-closer-links-between-police-and-public-health-in-south-wales/>
- ^{xii} For further information, see <http://democracy.merthyr.gov.uk/documents/s29431/SWANSEA%20HELP%20POINT%20A%20CASE%20STUDY.pdf>
- ^{xiii} For further information on this work, see: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/Kathryn%20Ashton%20-%20Improving%20outcomes%20in%20early%20years.pdf>
- ^{xiv} See <http://essexpartnership.org/content/about>
- ^{xv} For further information see: <http://www.essex.pcc.police.uk/2015/01/a-short-film-about-the-jaywick-drop-in-centre/>
- ^{xvi} See <http://democracy.tendringdc.gov.uk/akstendring/images/att2483.pdf>
- ^{xvii} See <http://publicservicetransformation.org/resources/service-design/834-helping-individuals-escape-the-crisis-cycle>

^{xviii} See <http://www.derbyshire-pcc.gov.uk/Finance-and-Grants/Grants/Crime-Prevention-Grants.aspx>

^{xix} <http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Consultations/AS-PCNA-draft.pdf>

^{xx} See <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/reshaping-policing-for-the-public.pdf>, p. 19

^{xxi} For further information on how PCCs can help to change services for individuals facing multiple and complex needs see Revolving Doors Agency (2014) *The Revolving Doors Checklist: How police and crime commissioners can improve responses to offenders with multiple and complex needs*.

^{xxii} See Revolving Doors Agency & T2A (2015) *PCC spotlight 1: Young Adults* available here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/pcc-spotlight-young-adults/>

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