



## Knowledge Exchange Network (October 2022): Person-centred policing

This session explored person-centred policing. As we have seen in previous sessions, psychosocial maturity among 18–25-year-olds can vary significantly, and slower development when unaddressed can manifest as criminal behaviour. We would therefore advocate for an extension of the child-centred policing principles outlined in this briefing to be extended to young adults. The slides for the session are available [here](#).

### Child-centred policing strategies: the example of Hampshire Constabulary

Chief Superintendent **Raj Kohli**, Hampshire Constabulary, presented on [Hampshire's child-centred policing strategy](#).

The strategy recognises the impact the police can have on children and young people (as either victims or offenders). How the police interact, communicate, listen and respond requires an understanding of individual circumstances, differences and needs, and a trauma-informed approach.

There are six key principles:

- Treating children as children: children do not think or behave in the same way as adults, and they face greater risks. Similarly, young adults (18-25 year olds) require a similar tailored approach, different to that of older adults.

## Together, we can put an end to the revolving door.

- Ensuring children and young people's voices are always listened to. See this [College of Policing article](#).
- Treating every interaction as an opportunity to understand young people's experiences and make them safer.
- Timeliness is vital: interventions are most effective when timely, so the opportunity to make a positive impact and protect someone from harm is not missed.
- Assess risk: the police must better understand the wider context.
- Share information: failure to share information is too common. Doing so ensure the best decisions can be made.

Hampshire has also identified six areas of focus:

- Identifying and protecting those who need help: better partnership working, recognising who is at risk or vulnerable, and responding effectively to protect them.
- Tackling crime and offending: bringing to justice those who exploit or harm vulnerable children, ensuring the youth offending approach is coherent and has a clear focus on early intervention.
- Building partnerships to enable a better service: partnerships must be meaningful, centred around protecting children and young people from harm, and improve the relationship between the public and the police.
- Looking after our people: ensuring staff have appropriate knowledge, skills and tools, while focusing on wellbeing and resilience. This has included training 227 'champions' to drive cultural and behavioural change. Over 1,500 staff members have received trauma-informed training.
- Ethical and inclusive: providing children and young people with opportunities to hold the police to account, shape services and influence priorities.
- Track, assess, learn and improve: promote a learning culture by analysing performance.

**“Every interaction leaves a mark and we need to think carefully about what sort of mark that is.”**

*– Chief Superintendent Raj Kohli*

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Other useful initiatives taken on by Hampshire include:

- Children as witnesses.
- Scrutinising and recording how officers respond to various demands (this has led to measurable improvements to practice when dealing with missing incidents).
- Disseminating a child-centred policing newsletter highlighting good work, areas to improve on and other updates.
- Breaking data down to local authority areas.
- Working to increase the number of children receiving safeguarding interviews in custody.

There are however various challenges: rising demand through multi-agency safeguarding hubs, the unknown impact of the Domestic Abuse Act on demand, accountability regarding disproportionality in Youth Offending Teams (YOT), and the impact of additional custody centres.

Audience members also recognised the importance of language and moving away from labelling. It was suggested that changing the name 'Youth *Offending* Teams' to 'Youth *Justice* Teams' would be a positive step.

**“Youth Community Resolution are still putting young people onto the first round of that justice ladder and there are opportunities outside of that, for example out of court disposals. We need to look at complete diversion to get these children not even touching the criminal justice system. That’s when we get in tricky water. When we got the Home Secretary driving harsher sanctions, it’s hard to make ethical decisions with children.”**

*– Police attendee*

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## Whole-family approaches: the Think Family Early Intervention Programme

**Siddhartha Bandyopadhyay**, Evaluation Lead, and **Maggie Hardiman**, Process Evaluation and Researcher, both at the University of Birmingham, recently evaluated Avon and Somerset Police's Think Family Early Intervention programme (TFEI).

Set up in response to the national Troubled Families initiative, TFEI seeks to support families with multiple and complex needs but who do not reach the threshold to receive support from other services. It aims to prevent the escalation and intergenerational cycle of offending and reduce the demand these families place on services. This involves a police officer or Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) building a relationship with a family for up to 12 months to identify problems, support and ultimately prevent future crime.

To be eligible for a referral to TFEI families need to meet at least two criteria. At least one police-related criteria (crime and anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse or children in need, such as missing incidents), as well as either a second police-related criteria or poor school attendance, unemployment or health problems.

The evaluation found that crime (including youth crime) and domestic abuse rates among families engaged in the intervention fell. These reductions were statistically significant. Although missing persons and anti-social behaviour incidents were lower after the intervention, this was not a statistically significant finding.

These results contributed to reduced demand on the police and therefore the intervention has a cost benefit to the police and other services. There were concerns however about bureaucracy, selection of families, officers/PCSOs not being qualified to provide the support required and overlap with other support mechanisms.

**“There was a real discrepancy with some young people having too many people involved and TFEI being another thing on top of an overwhelming net of support. On the other hand, other young people were not getting any extra support which proved overwhelming to the officers.**

*– Siddhartha Bandyopadhyay*

**Together, we can put an end to the revolving door.**

There was a broad recognition, both amongst forces surveyed as part of the evaluation and those attending the KEN session, of the need for additional support for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or families where crime was happening, to prevent them get caught into the criminal justice system themselves.

**“The police is not here just to lock people up. We are here to try and help people as well”**

*– Police attendee*

## **About the Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN)**

The Police Foundation and Revolving Doors launched the Knowledge Exchange Network in 2020, bringing together police Inspectors and Chief Inspectors from across England and Wales to co-create new and better ways of policing young adults aged 18-25. This Network provides police with much needed peer-to-peer learning and support, recognising the wealth of knowledge and expertise among police officers. Inspectors and Chief Inspectors across police services in England and Wales will be able to share evidence and tackle difficult issues. The focus will be on upscaling evidence-based innovation and practices, and embedding it into mainstream policing.

**For more information about the next session or the network, [sign up here](#) or contact [info@police-foundation.org.uk](mailto:info@police-foundation.org.uk) or [admin@revolving-doors.org.uk](mailto:admin@revolving-doors.org.uk).**