

# Domestic Abuse and Young People: Equipping the Youth Justice Sector

Anne-Marie Harris  
Child to Parent Violence Forum University of Leeds  
15<sup>th</sup> July 2014



## Who are we?

- The YJB is an non-departmental public body
- The role of the YJB is to oversee the youth justice system in England and Wales.
- The statutory responsibilities of the YJB include:
  - Advising Ministers on the operation of, and standards for, the youth justice system;
  - Monitoring the performance of the youth justice system;
  - Purchasing secure accommodation places for, and placing, children and young people remanded or sentenced by the courts to custody;
  - Identifying and promoting effective practice;
  - Commissioning research and publishing information;
  - Oversight of performance of youth justice services including multi-agency Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and secure accommodation providers, but does not directly manage any of the services.

# Addressing Domestic Abuse - YJB Response

## **Aim**

To ensure the youth justice sector feels equipped to work with young men and women who perpetrate domestic abuse – identified by the youth justice sector as a priority.

## **Rationale**

Youth Justice professionals have identified this area of practice as a sector priority. YOTs report that around 60% of cases are effected by domestic abuse. Domestic abuse can affect young people as perpetrators, witnesses or victims. It is important that YOTs are equipped to deal with these complex and often over-lapping issues within a family context. This requires access to specialist training and resources.

## **Deliverables**

Develop and maintain a domestic abuse webpage

Support the Home Office and CPS's 'This is Abuse' campaign with a particular focus on the Specific Domestic Violence Court pilot

Identify and make known resources to support the sector

Awareness raising of key issues with Heads of Service

## Focus on APV – what is the issue?

- Professionals reported that they did not feel equipped to address the issue of adolescent to parent violence.
- Audits of case files revealed that at least 40% of cases across the YOT encountered adolescent to parent violence.
- We needed to respond!!!

## **Domestic Abuse – Cross Government Response**

- VAWG Action Plan
- Troubled Families
- Ending Gang and Youth Violence
- Children's Commissioner's CSE Report

## What have we done?

- In consultation with several YOTs in the North and North West of England, and the South East Parenting Forum, we have:
  - Completed a domestic abuse webpage pulling together all the latest research and interventions regarding domestic abuse: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice/reducing-re-offending/domestic-abuse>
  - Successfully disseminated an information guide for local services following the definition extension in March 2013 via the webpage and YOT/ SE bulletins.
- Focused on Adolescent to Parent Violence (APV), as many YOTs were reporting high levels of this abuse, but a significant lack of resources. We therefore:
  - Ran an APV Seminar at National Youth Justice Convention in November 2013.
  - Have successfully influenced the Home Office, to ensure that APV is included in the 'Ending Violence against Women and Girls' Action Plan.
  - Formed close links with the 'This is Abuse Campaign' – including aligning web-page content
- Continue to work with the CPS and Home Office on the developing SDVC Youth Court Feasibility Study
- The YJB have successfully worked with Oxford University (Condry and Miles) in the final stages of their report in 2013 (Framing and Mapping a Hidden Problem, 2013).
  - National Information Paper for Local Services due to be published by the end of the year and disseminated early in 2015.

# Youth SDVC

We continue to work with the CPS and Home Office on the developing SDVC Youth Court Feasibility Study

## **Aim**

Explore the feasibility of developing the special domestic violence court within the Youth Court

## **Rationale**

Domestic abuse equally impacts upon young victims and perpetrators under the age of 18, and therefore they are entitled to the same special measures and protection afforded to adults

## **Deliverables**

Feasibility Study completed December 2013 following stakeholder consultation exercise July 2013.

YJB continue to work closely with CPS and Home Office regarding this important development.

## Next Steps - APV

- Home Office as domestic abuse policy lead have agreed to take over this key piece of work from March 2014. Also included in VAWG Action Plan to ensure cross-Whitehall accountability and Ministerial oversight.
- Complete Information Paper.
- Disseminate via series of national events targeted at Heads of Service, Chairs of LSCBs, Police leads early in 2015.



# Any questions?

For further information:

[Anne-Marie.Harris@yjb.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Anne-Marie.Harris@yjb.gsi.gov.uk) or phone on  
07909099648

