

Prompt Positive Action

Interventions with offenders
aged 18-25 in South Wales

FINAL REPORT

By Keith Towler

Commissioned by the Police and Crime
Commissioner for South Wales

A Qualitative Review

of the MAC18-25 Triage Project
and DIVERT 18-25 Project

March 2017

MAC 18–25 TRIAGE PROJECT & DIVERT 18-25 PROJECT QUALITATIVE REVIEW

CONTENTS

| | | Page No: |
|----|--|----------|
| 1 | Foreword by Alun Michael, Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales | 4 |
| 2 | Introduction | 6 |
| 3 | Summary and Recommendations | 7 |
| 4 | 18-25 Process (from arrest to completion) | 11 |
| 5 | Practice Observation: Screening Assessment | 15 |
| 6 | Practice Observation: Consequences of Crime Workshops | 22 |
| 7 | Practice Observation: Individual Support | 31 |
| 8 | Alcohol and Lifestyle Choices | 35 |
| 9 | Practice Observation: Victim Work and Restorative Practice | 37 |
| 10 | Steering Group and Stakeholder Organisations | 43 |
| 11 | Teams and Management Role | 44 |
| 12 | Wider Geographical Reach | 44 |
| 13 | 18-25: Purpose, Remit, Funding and Governance | 45 |
| 14 | Diversion Policy: South Wales Police | 49 |
| 15 | Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) | 51 |
| 16 | Qualitative Review Methodology | 52 |
| 17 | Conclusion | 55 |

I was 16 hours in the cell, never again. It was cold and I was sick over myself. Not nice, never going through that again... and then you get a chance cos that is what Triage is. It's a chance to prove to yourself and your family you won't repeat your mistakes. I'm so grateful and I'm taking a lot away with me. You won't see me here again... I would like to say thanks
Male, 22 years old, student

It's a good course and I think Triage is making a difference, well it has for me. Its made me think. I'm not getting into trouble again. Sure of that.
Female, 20 years old, student

I listened to that women talk about her own story (in the Consequences of Crime Workshop) and she was brave to say it like. But then I thought is that what I've had. Am I bi-polar? I don't know but I think I get down, depressed like and this has helped me and now (my Triage Project Worker) has given me the confidence to go to the Doctor and talk about it.
Male, 21 years old, student

After I saw that, when this bloke who wasn't my Dad lived with us and hit me Mum and my sister, I was too little to do anything but I felt angry like. I still think about it and sometimes my anger gets the better of me and I hit things. I hit this bloke in the pub and that's why I'm here... Triage has spoken to me about it and I've had a session with this other guy (a counsellor arranged by MAC) and he was good ... I've got stuff to do ...yeh, I feel like maybe I can take some control.
Male 20 years old, student

I've been doing that sofa surfing for years now. When I left care and that was a shit experience I got no help and went to a hostel, then (slept) on the streets for a while before I stayed on people's sofas. I've got my own place now but it's a crappy bedsit so I have asked if they (DIVERT) can help me. They have said they will so that's great.
Male 23 years old, unemployed

Since attending Triage, I have focused on what inspires me in life and have not felt the need to resort to alcohol and nights out to enjoy myself. It has been a real eye opener and has made me think a lot about certain choices I make regarding alcohol and my reactions to situations. I hope that by attending Triage, I have repaired the harm that has been caused and that my apology will be accepted.
Male, 20 years old, Employed

If I had got a caution I would have got a criminal record, yes. But actually Triage is much more meaningful than being processed to a caution. Its made a big impact and I don't think I would have got that with a caution.
Male, 19 years old, student

1. Foreword by Rt Hon Alun Michael, Police & Crime Commissioner

This report by Keith Towler is a stunning piece of work, which should - if it is not just read but also acted upon - change the way in which we tackle offending across South Wales.

The strength of Keith's report is that it looks at the significant impact on individuals and the interface between professional workers and those who offend.

- The report stresses the key impact of immediacy - of interventions that follow rapidly on offence and arrest.
- It identifies the unique "learning moment" that accompanies the "mortifying" experience of arrest and which can be life changing
- And it shows that the importance of this moment goes well beyond the incident that triggered police intervention - offering the opportunity for change in terms of personal responsibility, ambition, relationships, health and well-being.

This goes way beyond the hope and expectation with which we launched the 18 – 25 project and it is worth explaining how the project came about.

Before I became a Member of Parliament I worked with young offenders as a youth worker and I also chaired the then Juvenile Court in Cardiff. Experience in both capacities convinced me that most young people who offend didn't need to be offenders, if only somebody had intervened at the right moment.

That experience combined with a mass of evidence led to the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and the establishment of the Youth Offending Teams and the Use Justice Board. Their interventions were capped at the age of 18, but that was only because the age of prolific offending in the 1990s was under 18.

We expected the initiative to reduce Reoffending by first-time offenders for the first few years, but it is a shock to see that after nearly 20 years, the numbers continue to fall year on year. The remaining challenge is the small group under 18 who go on to offend frequently and seriously.

I have long thought that a similar approach of quick intervention after the initial offence could also cut reoffending in the 18+ age group. Indeed, 18 to 25 is now the age of most prolific offending. So when I was elected as Police and Crime Commissioner, it was a prime objective to tackle offending in the 18 to 25 age group.

Formal evaluation and statistical details will be forthcoming in the fullness of time, but Keith Towler's report shows beyond doubt that the potential for reducing offending by this older age group is far greater and more significant than we had dared to hope.

Anybody reading this report will, I believe, be convinced that we have to continue and expand this initiative.

- That will be in the interests of the individuals concerned and offer them a future free of crime and stigma.
- Equally important, it will prevent many people across our communities becoming victims of crime.
- It will lift some of the burdens that currently fall on family and friends.
- And it will reduce the damage done to local communities and the offender's peer group.

Continuing this work will be a challenge because it has depended on police money - through the Police Improvement Fund and directly from our South Wales Police budget - and I have made that investment with the full support of the Chief Constable, Peter Vaughan QPM, because it is right to do so and because our shared priority is to protect the vulnerable and reduce crime.

However, the savings come elsewhere, in the courts and other parts of the Criminal Justice System and possibly other agencies like the Health Service. Our investment is providing proof of the benefits and the evidence will be further tested in the formal evaluation, but the challenge then will be to find a way of harnessing resources to maintain and develop this work without further depleting police finances, which will be cut even further in coming years.

With the 18-25 age group, as with the under 18 age group, we are committed to understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – a reality that was quantified in the extraordinary piece of work undertaken by our partners in Public Health Wales. This understanding may make the interventions with the 18-25 age group even more effective.

What is clear from Keith Towler's report is that the work he describes should have the support of all agencies working across South Wales, as well as Welsh Government, the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office. This report will be shared immediately with the other Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales who have already shown interest in this work, with our partners in Welsh Government and the National Offender Management Service and with those we work with in Local Government, the NHS and the Voluntary Sector.

It makes thought-provoking and exciting reading.



Police & Crime Commissioner for South Wales

2. Introduction by Keith Towler

The 18-25 Diversion Projects were launched in January 2015 by the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales. They work with 18 to 25 year olds who have been arrested in order to prevent repeat offending. This also has the benefit of diverting them away from the criminal justice system. It adopts a restorative practice approach.

If a young adult is accepted onto the Project they receive an Adult Community Resolution instead of being processed to a caution or court disposal. Undertaking the Adult Community Resolution, where the young person accepts responsibility for his or her actions, results in a programme of intervention and the young person avoids receiving a criminal record. Each young adult agrees to an individual intervention plan with his or her 18-25 Project Worker. The intervention plan aims to address offending behaviour using a restorative practice model, and identifies steps to be taken to support the young adult if further needs are identified.

In Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea the work is managed by Media Academy Cardiff (MAC), a third sector organisation, and in Cwm Taf (Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr) by the local authority DIVERT Team. The MAC work is known as the 18-25 Triage Project and in Cwm Taf the project is called DIVERT 18-25. This review looks at both and refers to the 18-25 Project except when referring specifically to one or other of the above.

The Strategic Oversight for the 18-25 Project is provided through the South Wales Criminal Justice and IOM Board and within South Wales Police by the Bronze Board on Victims, Offenders and the Criminal Justice System, which reports to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable. The operational arrangements are overseen by a multi agency Steering Group.

Keith Towler was commissioned by The Police and Crime Commissioner to undertake a holistic, independent evaluation of the 18-25 Project across the South Wales Police Area. It is not an academic study but looks at quality, the experience of the young adults involved and the approach taken by practitioners. It asks what impact this work is having in practice. The Commissioner is looking separately at the statistics in respect of each scheme. In accordance with the requirements of the evaluation plan agreed by the Home Office Police Innovation Fund, this qualitative review, will be complemented by detailed analysis of the statistical data gathered by MAC and DIVERT between April 2016 and March 2017.

The review began in June 2016 and concluded in March 2017 and this report outlines the findings. During that time 547 young adults (452 MAC 18-25 Triage and 95 DIVERT 18-25) passed through the 18-25 Project and 70 participated directly in this review.

3. Summary and Recommendations

This review's conclusions are overwhelmingly positive and it has established that the 18-25 Project has made a considerable impact on the young adults who have taken the opportunity to have an Adult Community Resolution instead of being processed through the criminal justice system to receive a criminal record via caution or court disposal. Participants are aware that the fact that they have been given an Adult Community Resolution will be recorded on police systems and would therefore be known to the Custody Sergeant should they re-offend.

One key finding is that the speed of intervention from arrest to being bailed to appear at a police station for the triage screening and assessment is central to success. In most cases this happens in days and the immediacy of the process is important. It leaves the young person in no doubt about the seriousness of their situation and that in turn appears to motivate compliance and a desire to co-operate. It should be noted that the intervention involves an immediate challenge to the offending behaviour and requires engagement from the offender in a way that does not happen, for example, with a formal caution.

Being bailed to appear at the police station for the screening and assessment is also significant. The police station provides the right environment for that assessment. To do it elsewhere would minimise impact. Being interviewed in a formal situation like the police station but by a Project Worker who is attentive and friendly provides the right conditions for honest disclosures.

The 'Consequences of Crime' workshops have a significant impact and the commitment to restorative practice is important, utilising shuttle mediation, letters of apology to the victims and impact statements to give meaning to the process.

Victim satisfaction and participation levels are low and this review has identified some actions that need to be taken to address this. The Commissioner has been made aware of this and his Victims Lead will be working with the MAC and DIVERT 18-25 teams to address this concern. There is no doubt that the restorative approach is positive and effective for the offender but a key principle of the approach is that it must be the choice of, and to the benefit of, the victim and further efforts will be made to engage victims on this basis.

Given the complexity of the support needs that many of these young people exhibit, the approach of the Project Worker is a skilled one. Practice observations show that the Project Workers avoid a didactic approach and seek to understand the attitudes and motivation of the offender. They listen well and respond to young people in a realistic and professional way. Issues of confidentiality and risk are discussed with the young people and all the young people are positive about the way in which the Project Workers approach their work.

All participants understand that the Project Workers are not police officers and do not work directly for the police and that is a strength in their eyes.

It is also worth noting that out of the 70 young people who participated in this review only 6 of them referred to having any previous contact with statutory services other than attending school and going to their doctor when they were ill or had routine health checks.

The commitment of the Project Workers to the 18-25 Project and to the young people is commendable. Their approach is young people centred and the young people respond to them openly often talking about personal issues they did not expect to share. Building a trusted relationship in such a short time is skilled work.

Referrals to the 18-25 Project are consistent and the Project Teams are busy. This indicates that arresting officers and custody sergeants are increasingly confident in referring offenders. At the time of the initial pilot in Bridgend it was thought that they might be reluctant to make such referrals and from the start it was found that custody sergeants, being experienced in the work of the Youth Offending Team in their area, were supportive and quick to see the value of the 18-25 Project approach.

The youth work methodology that is used to engage with the young people is very effective and the support needs that are identified and dealt with provide a practical example of how diversion and prevention, while addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) works in harmony to positive effect.

The review has sought was to identify the motivation of young people to desist from further offending. The 18-25 Project has not been running long enough to determine with any accuracy what the likely re-offending rate might be. There is however room for optimism that the commitments that the young people make to change, or take control of their behaviour, will have a long lasting impact. The opportunity to participate in this Project is likely to be seen by many, as they look back on this period in their lives, as a significant moment. A moment that allowed them the chance to reflect on their lives and not to get a criminal record even though the police arrested them. It represents a golden learning opportunity as they make the transition from their youth to adulthood with lessons that should stand them in good stead as they move forward in their lives.

Recommendation 1

The 18-25 Project now plays a key role in the diversion practice of South Wales Police and the fact that there are practice variations in place is a strength in the initial pilot period but is not acceptable for the long term. This has been discussed at the Steering Group. The practice variation for the 18-25 Project results in young people being bailed until they complete their programme in Cwm Taf via the Merthyr Bridewell while young people attending Bridewells in Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea are released from bail as soon as they agree to undertake a voluntary programme. It is recommended that the Commissioner should work with partners to develop a

Diversion Policy that is consistent across the age ranges for the 18-25 Project to implement as a consistent practice model.

Recommendation 2

The Screening Assessment should always be held in the Police Station and be conducted by the 18-25 Project Worker.

Recommendation 3

In line with best practice the line managers of the Project Workers should routinely discuss safeguarding concerns in supervision meetings as well as acting quickly and promptly when such issues arise.

Recommendation 4

The DIVERT Team should make sure that each venue for their Consequences of Crime workshops are suitable and that any distractions can be avoided.

Recommendation 5

When a referral is made from the Women's Pathfinder for a young woman to attend a Consequence of Crime Workshop care should be taken both by the Women's Pathfinder (IOM Cymru Diversionary Scheme for female offenders) staff and by the 18-25 Team to explain the purpose of the workshop ensuring all participants accept responsibility for their offending.

Recommendation 6

The MAC and DIVERT teams should arrange to observe, shadow and learn from each other's workshop practice to assist the development of future interventions, to discuss practice challenges and to inform new approaches.

Recommendation 7

The MAC and DIVERT teams should call together all the guest speakers and partner organisations that attend the workshops with a view to discussing the way in which their interventions work currently and to explore opportunities to develop new approaches. This could also be an opportunity to feedback to them about the progress being made, to share evaluations and to outline future plans and should involve the Police and Crime Commissioner's team, the operational policing team, Probation and the Youth Justice Board.

Recommendation 8

When a Project Worker refers a young person to an external agency for support or intervention they should encourage attendance or accompany the young person to the first appointment if needed. The Project Worker should not normally provide continued support beyond the first appointment unless agreed by their manager.

Recommendation 9

This review highlights concerns about the coercive nature of initiation and drinking rituals. The South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner should raise awareness of these practices with the Wales Rugby Union, the Football Association of Wales, Sports Wales and with Universities, Colleges and

Students Unions and discuss the practical application of the safeguarding and well-being responsibilities they have for the young people who attend their provision.

Recommendation 10

More work needs to be done to both understand the low level of victim participation in restorative justice and then to increase participation levels by:

1. Understanding why victims engage more readily in Restorative Justice for the under-18 age group and whether parental involvement plays any significant part.
2. Conducting a general awareness raising campaign using local and regional media to increase the public's understanding of restorative practice and the role of the 18-25 Project in Bridgend, Cardiff, Swansea and Cwm Taf.
3. Recording more fully the work that MAC and DIVERT actually undertake in supporting victims via Project Worker contact.
4. Reviewing the letters that are sent to victims and trying different engagement techniques including asking directly for a face to face meeting between the Project Worker and the victim rather than relying on telephone, text and email contact.

Recommendation 11.

Governance for the 18-25 Project and its Steering Group should be absorbed into the new arrangements currently under development to avoid duplication. This is being led by the Police and Crime Commissioner and developed jointly with the IOM Team, operational Policing, Probation and YOTS to ensure a robust collaborative approach is at the centre of the delivery model.

Recommendation 12.

Work should be undertaken to explore with the other Commissioners and Chief Constables the possibility of rolling out the 18-25 approach on an all Wales basis. This might be achieved in stages starting immediately if agreement can be reached to offer this option to young people who offend in South Wales but live outside the area while exploring a potential widening of the current 18-25 Project to Gwent, Dyfed Powys and North Wales.

4. 18-25 Process – from arrest to completion

With the 18-25 Project in place an entirely new approach has been developed and piloted for offences committed by offenders in the 18-25 age group across the South Wales Police area.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the 18-25 Project the young person arrested must be aged 18–25, be resident in the South Wales Police area, have committed an offence (in the majority of cases these are usually, but not always, their first offence) which they must admit responsibility for. Sexual offences, knife crimes, domestic violence and motoring offences are excluded. The DIVERT Project accepts referrals of 18-25s who have previously received a caution and the MAC 18-25 Project accepts referrals where 18-25's have previous convictions and cautions. Each case is considered by the custody sergeant in terms of the nature and degree of the previous offending in order to establish whether diversion would be an appropriate disposal (public interest test).

Arrest

On arrest the young person is brought to the nearest Bridewell Police Station (Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr, Swansea) and the Custody Sergeant determines whether the young person meets the eligibility criteria for the 18-25 Project in consultation with the arresting officer.

Niche Recording System

If the criteria are met the young person is given some information about the MAC 18-25 Triage Project or the DIVERT 18-25 Project by the Custody Sergeant or arresting officer and is usually bailed to appear back at the police station on an agreed date (usually within a matter of days) to attend a Screening Assessment with the Project Worker. At this point the Custody Sergeant inputs the relevant information on the custody log. South Wales Police use the Niche System, which automatically logs policing activities in a single system on a single database. The result is transparency of work from the frontline of policing. Anyone who logs on to Niche can see who is doing what and update any actions.

Project Workers have full access to the Niche System so can see who has been arrested and referred to the 18-25 Project. As the young person proceeds through the 18-25 process the Project Workers are required to update Niche.

Screening Assessment

At the screening assessment the young person attends the police station and meets the Project Worker. The young person is interviewed by the Project Worker who uses a screening assessment pro forma. If the Project Worker accepts the young person onto the 18-25 Project the young person will have

accepted responsibility for the offence and agreed to a programme of intervention known as the Adult Community Resolution. This is recorded on the Niche system but the young person does not receive a criminal record (as they would with a caution or court disposal). If the young person does reoffend the Adult Community Resolution will be on Niche and the Custody Sergeant would not normally refer again to the 18-25 Project.

Adult Community Resolution Agreement

The agreement between the young person and the Project Worker is signed by both parties and each retains a copy. The young person is given information about the MAC 18-25 Triage Project or the DIVERT 18-25 Project and leaves the meeting with a clear understanding of the Adult Community Resolution programme they will be completing.

Process Difference

There is a difference in process between the way MAC 18-25 Triage Project works across the Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea Bridewells and how the DIVERT 18-25 Team works at the Merthyr Bridewell. When a young person agrees to work with the MAC Team they enter into a voluntary agreement to complete their Adult Community Resolution. The Custody Sergeant is informed that the young person is accepted onto the Project and the custody record is finalised noting that bail was answered and that the young person has received the Adult Community Resolution. When the DIVERT Team accept a young person onto the Adult Community Resolution they are further bailed until the Adult Community Resolution is completed. It is not until the Adult Community Resolution is completed that the Project Worker informs the Custody Sergeant who then updates Niche recording that the young person has completed the Adult Community Resolution.

From the outset it was agreed that DIVERT would operate differently as a practice comparison to highlight differences and to explore both models. There is an anxiety in the Cwm Taf area amongst professionals that the young people would not complete the Adult Community Resolution unless it was something they have to work to achieve. There is a fear that the voluntary arrangement managed by MAC would result in young people not completing the Adult Community Resolution in their area and therefore some young people would *get away with their offending* without any commitment being made to change their behaviour. The DIVERT Team have pointed out that there are close knit communities in Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taff and that if eligible young people are taken onto the 18-25 Project but fail to complete with no consequences, that word would spread that they can get away with their offending and that this will also undermine victim engagement and confidence.

The MAC approach is informed by their commitment to a youth work methodology that recognises the strength inherent in a voluntary agreement where trust builds self-confidence and results in the young person taking full responsibility for their actions.

The Commissioner has indicated that he would be happy for the difference to be maintained and monitored until the full evaluation has been completed and then reviewed jointly by the key agencies and by the South Wales Out-of-Court Disposal Panel.

Recommendation 1

The 18-25 Project now plays a key role in the diversion practice of South Wales Police and the fact that there are practice variations in place is a strength in the initial pilot period but is not acceptable for the long term. This has been discussed at the Steering Group. The practice variation for the 18-25 Project results in young people being bailed until they complete their programme in Cwm Taf via the Merthyr Bridewell while young people attending Bridewells in Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea are released from bail as soon as they agree to undertake a voluntary programme. It is recommended that the Commissioner should work with partners to develop a Diversion Policy that is consistent across the age ranges for the 18-25 Project to implement as a consistent practice model.

Adult Community Resolution Programme

When a young person is accepted onto 18-25 Project the Adult Community Resolution requirements they have to complete are designed for their individual circumstances. They normally contain three distinct parts including individual support, attendance at 'Consequences of Crime' workshops and a restorative element that could include writing a letter of apology for the victim or a meeting with the victim known in a 'restorative conference':

Individual support – during the Screening Assessment young people are asked a number of questions about their family circumstances, their physical and mental health needs, their lifestyle and their attitude to the offence and the circumstances that led them to get arrested. The information and disclosures shared are used to develop a programme of individual support that can include referral to a number of external agencies.

In view of the work being undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner with Public Health Wales there is an expectation that this programme will be developed to use an 'ACE Lens' (see 15. Below) to identify individual needs and that connections to the NHS and other relevant agencies will be strengthened in practical ways.

Consequences of Crime Workshops – these run regularly where young people who are accepted onto the 18-25 Project are required to attend at least one workshop. The workshops run as group sessions where the participants are led through a full day workshop that explores offending behaviour, lifestyle issues and the consequences of offending on victims and their wider family and on the community. MAC have also developed a bespoke violence workshop to specifically address violent offences that participants who commit such crimes are required to attend in addition to the Consequences of Crime Workshop. This also includes those whose offence was not violent but who revealed issues in discussion with a Project Worker.

This is very positive in addressing issues that might result in a further serious offence at a later stage.

Restorative practice – all the work that MAC and DIVERT oversee is informed by a commitment to restorative practice. By supporting young people to deal with conflict in a positive way restorative approaches can help to ensure that they are equipped with the learning and skills to avoid getting into further trouble. It's an approach that improves their life chances, gives them an understanding of victim impact and enables them to think for themselves about how to respond to challenging situations. As a result the young people are able to build trust and develop more mature responses to difficult situations. The products of this for the 18-25 Adult Community Resolution can include writing a letter of apology for the victim, a meeting with the victim in a planned restorative conference to explore ways in which the victim has been impacted, provide an opportunity for an apology to be given and accepted, some form of shuttle mediation and can agree some reparation in the form of work or a specific activity. Both the MAC and DIVERT Teams support the victims using telephone contact, email and face-to-face meetings to update them. The Commissioner supports and promotes the use of restorative approaches on the principle of the primary benefit being for the victim but also considers the value in the rehabilitation of the offender to be enormously important.

Adult Community Resolution Completion

At the completion of the Adult Community Resolution the young person leaves and there are no further obligations to meet. Both MAC and DIVERT do follow up contact surveys with the young people and the victims to track progress. If the young person commits no further offence they will have taken the opportunity given to address their offence in a meaningful way without having a criminal record to their name.

DIVERT 18-25 Project Needs Assessment and Support Service for all 18-25's

From 16th January 2017 the DIVERT Team have a permanent desk in the Merthyr Bridewell Police Station offering an extended service to 18-25s who are not eligible for the DIVERT 18-25 Project. The DIVERT Team can now provide these young people with a needs assessment service where DIVERT Co-ordinators will discuss any issues or support requirements with a view to putting together an individual support plan that could include onward referrals to appropriate agencies to help with education, training, employment, mental health, substance misuse, financial issues, housing and accommodation, family support, counselling. Effectively once the Custody Sergeant determines that a young person will be processed for a criminal justice response they can also provide the young person with the opportunity to meet the DIVERT 18-25 support service (using leaflets that explain what's on offer). This is a positive development but the practice observation in this review does not include this work.

PRACTICE OBSERVATION

During the review a number of practice observations were completed. At these sessions the reviewer was able to observe and participate in the screening assessments and the workshops, interviewed and entered into discussion with the young people who participated, held discussions with partner organisations and professionals who were involved and it provided an opportunity to record practice. The notes that were taken include quotes from young people and professionals and some of these are used below to give their perspective.

5. 18-25 Screening Assessment – Practice Observation

All the Screening Assessments take place in police stations. So having been arrested the young person is bailed back to the station to meet the Project Worker for the assessment. The reviewer attended four Screening Assessment sessions in Bridgend, Cardiff, Swansea and Pontypridd. Three young people were interviewed in each session observed.

All the interviews are held in a private room in the police station where the young person and the Project Worker meet. The Project Worker uses a screening assessment pro forma and records what is said and agreed on hard copy.

The Project Workers have to build some trust with the young person being interviewed. It is a balance between a very formal approach that is asking serious questions and expecting thoughtful answers and informality that tries to put the young person at ease so that they participate fully. It is complex work and the youth work methodology comes into its own. All the young people are quite nervous and anxious as they enter the station, they are met by the Project Worker who shakes the offender's hand, introduces herself or himself and quickly explains what will be happening. A seat is offered and an informal discussion takes place before and during the assessment questions. In this way the young person begins to relax but the formality of the venue is not lost on them as they proceed to answer questions. The assessment on average lasts about 45 minutes. The shortest interview was 15 minutes and the longest was over an hour. The length of the interview is dependent upon the complexity of the case or the support needs that are identified.

During the assessment the young person will be asked to explain in their own words what happened that led to them being arrested:

Me and two friends, we had a few drinks maybe 2 or 3 cans of Fosters. Getting a taxi to Porthcawl. I needed cash and went to the machine where a girl was sitting on the floor crying. I asked if she was OK and this bloke reacted, told me to fuck off. I took money out. She thought she had lost her card and my mate was helping her look in her bag. The bloke wasn't happy telling me it was nothing to do with me. The girl asked me to look in her bag and I sat next to her and went through her bag. I was trying to help her but he

wasn't happy. I started to walk away and he shouted out to me telling me to fuck off and that I was only interested in getting a rub. I went to walk away but he called back to me. I pushed him, he fell to floor. He had a cut and blood coming from his eye. I was scared. Two nights later I saw CCTV coverage of me on Wales Online and so I called the police. They (the police) came to my home and arrested me at 3.30am and took me to the police station. Didn't like it at all. Then they told to come here.

Male 20 years old, apprentice

(Note: the arresting officer confirmed that the CCTV film was inconclusive and that if he had not surrendered himself he would not have been found. The victim he 'pushed' had been punched five times and sustained significant injuries).

Me and the girls went for a casual drink. We were drinking vodka and lemonade then I drove us to Bridgend to go out. My friend asked me to go on a detour and she picked up some cocaine. It was my car. We had two more vodkas plus Jaegerbombs. I don't like drugs and I took the drugs off my friend to flush but I didn't do it. I wanted to avoid an argument so I said I would keep them safe for her. My friend took cocaine but I didn't, no way. We had two more Vodkas. I was tipsy but not drunk. I decided to move my car so I wouldn't get a parking ticket, then I drove down a one-way street the wrong way. Police stopped me, breathalysed and brought me to the police station. My bag was checked and the cocaine was found. I had forgotten I had it. Never want to go through being in custody again. It's terrible in the cells. Its been an awful experience. Talk about stupid. I'm so sorry.

Female 21 years old, employed

I had a night out with the rugby club. Had four pints in the club then went to the pub and I had four bottles of Bud. My mate offered cocaine and I bought some to use later then we got the minibus to (town). We were in the club well we went to two clubs and I was drinking vodka. I went to the bar and security approached me to do a random search. The Police were by the door and they found the bag. I was arrested, cuffed and put in the van. This was Saturday just gone (3 days ago). I was in custody for 10 hours, I hated it, don't want to go back. Felt stupid, to be honest, its just not worth it. I was worried what my girlfriend would think and she is not happy with me. I just went along with the boys, it was stupid. I was stupid.

Male 22 years old, student

I did it as a joke. Don't see my mother. Been living with (foster mother) half my life. I didn't mean anything by it like. I sent my mother messages pretending to be a copper ... I said some horrible things like. The police arrested me saying I was being arrested for sending the texts. I feel awful about it now. She (the Mother) doesn't want to speak me.

Male 20 years old, unemployed

I was drunk, got involved in some verbals and I bit this guys ear. I can't believe what I did, I'm embarrassed, feel gutted about my actions. I'm really

sorry for what I did. This has had a big impact on me. I know I should have walked away. I want to apologise to him, I feel really bad about it
Male 21 years old, student

I got done for drunk and disorderly. I urinated against a building on a night out for a friends birthday. I was out of order and being arrested is understandable. I'm disappointed in myself and a bit embarrassed and I don't want a criminal record but I know I've done wrong. Big time like.
Male 20 years old, apprentice

These examples typify the offence profile of those referred to the 18-25 Project. The majority involve alcohol and or drug use with some form of violence or anti social behaviour associated with the event. It is also worth noting that these young people are a real cross section of the population with students, apprentices, unemployed and employed young adults represented. As one of the Project Workers noted, *"all human life comes through our door!"*.

The offence description is followed by a series of questions that explores how they handled the situation and whether there was anything that they could have done differently. Ultimately the young person is asked if they accept responsibility for their offence.

I accept full responsibility. I'm so embarrassed by this but its my fault...I have been really foolish and I wish I could go back and change things but I can't so I'll do what I can now to put it right. I want to say I'm sorry.
Female aged 21 years, student

The assessment also includes questions about lifestyle, where they live, who they live with, whether they are in education, training or employment and whether they have any physical or mental health needs. They are asked about their social life, what they do in their spare time and whether they use alcohol or drugs. They are also asked if they have ever experienced domestic violence during their life and whether they have any involvement with any statutory services.

In a very short time the Project Worker has built a picture of the young person that informs their support needs and on the basis of the answers provided allows them to accept them onto the Project. Where they are not accepted a full explanation is given and the young person is referred back to the Custody Sergeant for a criminal justice response. During the review one young person did not accept responsibility that he had done anything wrong in an offence that involved intimidating a former girlfriend. It was a difficult assessment meeting but the Project Worker made the right call even though it was clear that this was a young man with several support needs.

The disclosures that the young adults make in this section of the assessment are quite telling and paint a picture of some vulnerability. Many of the young

people refer to mental health concerns ranging from feelings of anxiety and stress through to talking about past episodes of depression.

Its not an excuse like but I was very stressed like. I'm stressed a lot and get very anxious about things ... drinking helps me to feel better ... yes I know it's not the answer but how can I sort this out? ... I've never spoken to my doctor about it ... I'm anxious about saying anything
Male 23 years old, employed

I have suffered from depression ... I don't want to talk about it but I still worry that I'm depressed quite a bit. Well maybe anxious quite a bit. Oh I don't know, just stressed like. And I get headaches
Female 20 years old, employed

The interviews can become quite emotional as a young person describes an experience they have had in their life or as they express remorse for their behaviour. In answer to some questions during the screening assessment in the police station the young people referred to being caught off guard by the interview. Many did not know what to expect when they were bailed back for the assessment. They thought that they were going to be told off or shouted at. Most had no idea that they would be asked personal questions about their lives. It appears that being asked these questions by the Project Worker who is clearly taking an interest in them was not what they expected. Being spoken to by someone who clearly cared about and listened to them was a powerful experience. This is reinforced by where this meeting is taking place. Being interviewed in a formal situation like the police station but by a Project Worker who is attentive and friendly provides the right conditions for honest disclosures.

To be honest I didn't expect to go to the police station (for the bail back assessment) and be asked about my home life and that. I started crying. Well I tried not to show I was crying and then I told her (the Project Worker) about my Mum and that ... well my Dad used to hit her and he's left years ago. I didn't expect to start talking about all this and how its changed things for me. My depression and stuff and getting pissed is all wrapped up somehow ... yes, I'm trying to think how I can handle things better.

Male, 20 years old, student

Note: this young person told the reviewer later in his programme that the Project Worker had helped him. He has also spoken with his mother about his feelings and as a result their relationship has strengthened.

I thought I was coming in for a shouting at, well a bollocking to be honest. But then I got the Triage worker asking me all sorts of stuff I didn't expect to be talking about. It was strange like because I just started telling her things straight away.

Why do you think you did that?

I don't know. I was in the police station and she asked me so I told her.

Male, 19 years old, apprentice

During the review 70 young people participated and spoke about a number of personal and confidential matters including disclosures:

About being abused as a child.

About witnessing domestic abuse and violence.

They spoke of their concerns about:

- Depression, anxiety and poor mental health.
- Possibly being bi-polar.
- Smoking addiction.
- Drug misuse.
- Drinking and alcohol misuse.
- Bereavement, separation or loss.
- Family problems.
- Relationship problems

They also spoke of their need for help with:

- Finding a job.
- Getting on to training courses.
- Finding accommodation or somewhere to live.

When you consider the cross section of the population that the 18-25 Project works with it does provide quite a concerning level of previously un-met support needs. There is a very strong read across here with the Public Health Wales research on the impact of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and supports the finding that at least one in seven adults has experienced four or more adverse childhood experiences. The Commissioner and his team are working closely with Public Health Wales, the Youth Justice Board and others on tackling the practical consequences of that research for the Criminal Justice System generally and for young offenders in particular.

The Project Workers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and their concerns and observations are recorded and discussed in supervision and team meetings. Appropriate actions are taken, referrals are made and support is offered to the young person as required.

It is also worth noting that out of the 70 young people who participated in this review only 6 of them referred to having any previous contact with statutory services other than attending school and going to their doctor when they were ill or had routine health checks. Some did refer to attending youth provision when they were younger (Duke of Edinburgh, Urdd, Boys and Girls Club, local youth centre, sports clubs) but most saw this as activity based and not somewhere where they sought specific support for their problems.

As the Screening Assessment meeting concludes the Project Worker outlines what the Alternative Community Resolution is all about, what the young

person will have to do to complete it and an agreement is drawn up which is signed and dated by both parties. The young person leaves with a copy of the agreement, some written information about the MAC 18-25 Triage Project or DIVERT 18-25 Team including contact details for their Project Worker and the details of their next appointment (either a one to one meeting with the Project Worker or details of the workshop they will be attending).

Conclusion

The Screening Assessment is a robust process that the young people take seriously. There is no doubting that the young people who are accepted onto the MAC 18-25 Triage Project and the DIVERT 18-25 Project are immediately grateful for the opportunity to be involved. The fear of getting a criminal record is a huge motivating force and everyone involved does appear to understand the consequences of having a record and the impact that could make on their employment or education.

The way in which young people have reflected upon their behaviour and their offending is impressive. The vast majority of those referred had alcohol consumption as a key factor in their offending.

Diversion is a well-established principle that has operated in the youth justice system with under 18 year olds to prevent reoffending. Extending the principle of diversion for young adults aged 18 to 25 appears to make a significant impact on them. From observing the young people at various stages of the 18-25 process (screening and assessment and in the group workshop situation described below), responses from this age group have shown a level of maturity and participation that indicates the impact of their offending on others, whether there is a direct or indirect victim, is well understood and that the commitments they are making to address their situation are meaningful.

During one practice observation screening session one young person was not accepted onto the 18-25 Project because he could not accept that he had done anything wrong. This is in strong contrast with the majority who accept responsibility and seem well motivated to make amends, to apologise and to put things right as far as they can. Many clearly feel embarrassed about their behaviour. The opportunity to reflect on their offending and their own support needs without the need to go to court, or to tell people they would rather not know (for example, employers, university or college, family) is an intervention that the majority of participants respond to positively.

The skills of the Project Workers displayed during the Screening Assessment include; listening, asking sensitive questions, allowing space and time to consider responses, being sure that the young person understands what is happening and what they are agreeing to; are very good indeed. This is complex work that is complemented and enhanced by being conducted in the formal police station venue.

Recommendation 2

The Screening Assessment should always be held in the Police Station and be conducted by the 18-25 Project Worker.

Recommendation 3

In line with best practice the line managers of the Project Workers should routinely discuss safeguarding concerns in supervision meetings as well as acting quickly and promptly when such issues arise.

6. 18-25 Consequences of Crime Workshops – Practice Observation

Everyone who agrees to complete an Adult Community Resolution will complete at least one Consequence of Crime Workshop. During the evaluation the reviewer attended five of these workshops (Bridgend, Cardiff, Swansea and two in Pontypridd) and one Violence Workshop (Swansea). The Consequence of Crime Workshop involves input from the Project Workers as well as by external speakers. They are an interesting mix of presentations, individual and group exercises and discussion groups. They are a full day usually starting at 10am and concluding at 4pm or 5pm. The Violence Workshop is a half-day session.

During the Screening Assessment the Project Workers check out any employment, caring or university responsibilities and try to organise attendance on a day that is convenient. Most of the young people make arrangements (a day off work or college or cover for caring or childcare) so they can attend the workshop at their earliest convenience. For the majority of young people they are attending the workshop within a week or two of having been arrested.

The venues for the workshops vary from using MAC's own provision in Cardiff to hiring rooms in partner organisations. At MAC workshops lunch is provided although participants are required to provide their own lunch at the DIVERT Workshop. Both provide tea, coffee, water and biscuits at break times. All the venues were suitable in the main and easily accessible via public transport although the Cricket Pavilion used by the DIVERT Team in Ynysangharad Park had its challenges including an infestation of insects that distracted participants at both workshops the reviewer attended. The venue for DIVERT workshops has now changed and take place in the HUB meeting rooms in Ty Pennant, Pontypridd until a permanent home is established in the Working Links Training Room in the same building.

Recommendation 4

The DIVERT Team should make sure that each venue for their Consequences of Crime workshops are suitable and that any distractions can be avoided.

The young people do not always know each other so join a group of young people who are in a similar position to them but without knowing the circumstances of the other attendees. There were one or two examples where some participants did know each other and in those circumstances the Project Workers ensured they were not paired up in any exercises. The Project Workers also spoke about keeping friends apart by scheduling different workshops so that there is no peer-influencing going on as they work through the day.

On average there were 10 participants per workshop with 4 young men attending the Violence Workshop and 14 young people attending the Bridgend workshop. The majority of participants were male (42) with 9 female.

Four of the young women were referred from the Women's Pathfinder to the DIVERT Workshops. In one of the workshops where three Women's Pathfinder participants attended there was some uncertainty expressed by them as to why they were there. Both the Women's Pathfinder worker making the referral and the Project Worker receiving the referral should explain what is happening and check that it has been fully understood. Repetition of such important messages does not amount to duplication.

I've brought my overalls cos I thought I was going to paint a wall or something ... To be honest I don't think I've done anything wrong. In fact if I had my time over I would do what I did to protect my child. You are not going to tell me that what I did was wrong.

Female, 22 years old, Women's Pathfinder referral

This illustrates an issue that has the potential to disrupt the workshop for the others attending all of whom have admitted responsibility and understand what they have agreed to do with their 18-25 Project Worker. It certainly helps to increase the numbers of participants at the DIVERT Workshops but referrals from the Women's Pathfinder need a better understanding of what the workshops will entail before they arrive.

Recommendation 5

When a referral is made from the Women's Pathfinder for a young woman to attend a Consequence of Crime Workshop care should be taken both by the Women's Pathfinder (IOM Cymru Diversionary Scheme for female offenders) staff and by the 18-25 Team to explain the purpose of the workshop ensuring all participants accept responsibility for their offending.

There are two Project Workers at each workshop. They co-work the session taking full responsibility for the day. When one is presenting the other is observing participation by the young people. When guest presenters are running a session both Project Workers encourage the young people to participate, work alongside individuals as required and deal with any issues that might arise. This is a critical part of the workshop. The observation and encouragement ensures that all participants take part to the best of their availability. It is not possible for any participant to duck out from any of the sessions and the Project Workers are very skilled at observing the individual and group dynamic and responding accordingly.

The reviewer was disappointed to see on two occasions where both Project Workers used the opportunity of external presenters to check their social media or emails on their mobile phones, eat food and paint their fingernails. It should be emphasised that these were isolated occasions and should not be repeated (to do so could result in disciplinary action). This sets a poor example for the participants who are bound to notice, is disrespectful to them and the guest speakers and undermines the ability of the Project Worker to properly evaluate each young persons participation.

Sometimes Project Workers have to utilise all their skills to motivate and encourage participation if the group dynamic does not work for any reason. It

might be that the young people could be reticent to speak out in a group discussion or to enter into the spirit of a group dynamic. Youth work methodology works really well in group settings and the Project Workers adapt and change the day to suit the group they are working with by using ice-breaker games, learning sessions that involve moving around the room, having additional breaks so they can do some one to one encouragement work and giving individuals the opportunity to lead discussion. This is skilled work and the reviewer was impressed by the commitment, dedication and professional approach that the Project Workers displayed.

At the end of each workshop the staff do quite a detailed debrief of the day noting what went well, what sessions might need development or variance and talk through how they can improve and or develop the workshop next time. All the young people who attend complete an evaluation sheet at the end of the workshop and these are used to inform some of those discussions. Evaluation feedback is taken seriously and the MAC team share their ideas with their colleagues and manager so learning is shared. This reflects best practice and is excellent to see.

Consequences of Crime Workshop – Programme

Although each of the workshops have a different feel depending upon the group dynamic they all cover a number issues consistently. At the end of each workshop the young people can expect to:

- Understand the difference between a criminal record and an Adult Community Resolution and the different levels of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Understand how a criminal record can affect their lives.
- Understand how victims and the wider community are affected by crime.
- Understand common causes for young adults getting into trouble with the Police and what they can do to prevent this in the future.
- Understand more about mental health issues.
- Understand more about the effects of drugs and alcohol

There are some differences in the workshops run by MAC and by DIVERT. They are not hugely different and in many ways they are similar but the outline below reflects the differences such as they are. Both are very effective and the comparison is illustrative only.

Consequences of Crime Workshop - Format

1. Introductions and icebreaker games to get things going led by the Project Workers.
2. The 18-25 Process and the purpose of the workshop are explained.
3. First session: What is a criminal? Gets young people to think through what stereotypes exist. How offences are dealt with by the Criminal Justice Systems. Different scenarios are discussed and learning points are identified. Allows the young people to think through what might

have happened to them if they had not been accepted onto the 18-25 Project.

4. Session on DBS checks. Implications of a criminal record on employment and travel are explored.
5. What an Adult Community Resolution is and what it means for all the participants. An opportunity to reflect on its status and what will happen if they are arrested by the Police again.
6. The DIVERT Workshop at this point introduces two external speakers from the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) who provide an extended excellent session on consequences, stopping and thinking using individual worksheets and group exercises. The young people learn how an activating event, their beliefs and consequences affect their outcome. How they can avoid getting drawn into offending if they respond to the activating event in a different way. A detailed scenario is explored and developed and the young people have an enjoyable experiential learning experience.
7. The MAC workshop covers the same material exploring the reasons why young adults may get into trouble, they look at hobbies and interests and which can get you into trouble, look at the effects of crime on individuals, families, communities and groups, how peer influences work in a positive and negative way and explores ways in which the young person can take back control. Using quizzes, video clips, individual and group exercises and reflection sheets the young people participate in an enjoyable experiential learning experience.
8. LUNCH BREAK
9. Sessions on mental health and depression. MAC use a very effective guest speaker for this from Time to Change Wales.
10. Session on alcohol and drugs misuse and the effect of alcohol and drugs on health and decision making with a guest speaker. Guest speakers include TEDS (Treatment and Education Drug Services), Switched On! (Drugs and Alcohol Services for Young People).
11. Evaluation Sheets.
12. End

At the MAC Workshop the young people are told that it is up to them if they want to share what they were arrested for. At the DIVERT workshop they are asked to share why they are at the workshop including the details of their offence. These are very different approaches and the young people usually shared whether they were required to or not. They showed no embarrassment in sharing, as they clearly felt comfortable in the workshop setting, which in no small way pays quite a compliment to the work of the Project Workers and guest speakers.

Both approaches work well but it is worth noting that the Project Workers do adapt and respond to each group dynamic. Some groups almost immediately participate well and there is a flow to the discussions. Others can present differently and the Project Workers adapt their approach to suit. This can include doing more individual work, introducing more icebreaker games, or splitting the whole group into smaller units. The key for the Project Workers is

to ensure the group works well with each young person contributing to the best of their ability.

Violence Workshop

Given the number of young people involved in violent offences the MAC team decided to develop a violence workshop that runs for a half day session (2 hours). The reviewer was able to attend one of these where four young men participated. All of them had completed the Consequence of Crime Workshop but agreed to this additional session so they could address their own violent behaviour.

The workshop looked at various scenarios and how violence is defined. What behaviour constitutes a violent response, how to control emotions and recognise triggers and events that might cause a negative physical or emotional outburst. The workshop also looked at the consequences of violence and the impact on the victim.

The workshop used a variety of methods including individual and group reflection, exercises and discussions. The participants watched a very powerful film about a real life example of a drunken violent incident that had long term implications for the victim. The victim of the offence and his family speak very openly and honestly about the devastating effect that one night had on all of them. The film is called *One Punch Ruins Lives* and was produced by South Wales Police <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enAzCNGD1Gc>

There is much to learn from this film but perhaps the key learning point is to *Stay in control and walk away from trouble*.

The consequences for the offender are discussed in the group as a result of hearing directly from the victim in the film.

Impact of Workshops on Young People

The disclosures during the group work and discussions can be confidential in nature and all the participants are made aware that they should each take responsibility for respecting confidentiality.

The majority of the young people who participated did so to the best of their ability and took the workshops very seriously. Participation levels were high and the young people were able to identify their own learning points.

The quotes below are taken directly from young people who have attended the Consequences of Crime workshops either in person with the reviewer or in their written impact statements. They are illustrative of what the majority of young people report. They demonstrate remorse, embarrassment, a desire to make good any harm they have done and a determination to learn from their mistakes. Taken as a whole these quotes provide some room for optimism that the 18-25 Project is likely to be able to demonstrate statistical impact on re-offending when it has several years practice to reflect upon.

What these quotes indicate, at this stage in the Project's development, is the immediate impact on young people and the potential for the intervention to be a landmark moment in their life.

Yes, I'm so relieved to get this opportunity. I'm really grateful to be here, can't believe it to be honest. I'm in my third year at Uni and I just can't afford to blow it. This (the Triage Project) is better than doing time, not that what I did was that serious like but getting this chance is great. Not going to mess this up.

Male, 22 years old, student

I feel a lot better and happier for going to Triage as it means that I have not got a criminal record, I feel a lot more relaxed about what has happened. I learnt a lot with Triage including ways to prevent the same thing from happening again, and I now know that I need to listen to the police when they tell me to calm down. I also learnt about the way that alcohol can affect the way that a person can think, feel and behave.

Male, 21 years old, Extract from Impact Statement

Working with Triage has made me realise what could have happened if I had done something worse, and to not drink as much. I also understand that I should walk away if there is ever any trouble. I hope that by me writing this letter, you realise I have never been in trouble with the police before and this was completely out of the ordinary for me. I am sorry for the inconvenience I have caused.

Male, 22 years old, Extract from Impact Statement

Since attending Triage, I have focused on what inspires me in life and have not felt the need to resort to alcohol and nights out to enjoy myself. It has been a real eye opener and has made me think a lot about certain choices I make regarding alcohol and my reactions to situations. I hope that by attending Triage, I have repaired the harm that has been caused and that my apology will be accepted.

Male, 20 years old, Extract from Impact Statement

Triage has taught me many things on how even low level offences, even though having no criminal convictions, cautions or being charged would still affect lives. After having a second chance I cannot take this for granted. With my future prospects of becoming a professional in the health sector, I cannot risk having a caution, conviction or even charged as this will affect my whole life and my desire to reach my goals. Therefore I have become more responsible whilst out with my friends and knowing my limit and to always stick together. I'd like to apologise to the Police and the police officer that arrested me since ... I'd also like to apologise to the St Johns staff for the

inconvenience I have caused considering their main responsibility was my safety and I'm extremely grateful for everyone that was trying to help me. I hope that the officer that arrested me and the staff at St Johns will see this statement and understand that I had no intention of committing this offence.

Male, 23 years old, Extract from Impact Statement

I was 16 hours in the cell, never again. It was cold and I was sick over myself. Not nice, never going through that again... and then you get a chance cos that is what Triage is. It's a chance to prove to yourself and your family you won't repeat your mistakes. I'm so grateful and I'm taking a lot away with me. You won't see me here again... I would like to say thanks

Male, 22 years old, student

There were huge implications for my life. A criminal record would have been devastating for me. I'm so grateful for this opportunity. I won't be here again. I know it!

Male, 22 years old, employed

It's a good course and I think Triage is making a difference, well it has for me. It's made me think. I'm not getting into trouble again. Sure of that.

Female, 20 years old, student

If I had got a caution I would have got a criminal record, yes. But actually Triage is much more meaningful than being processed to a caution. It's made a big impact and I don't think I would have got that with a caution.

Male, 19 years old, student

So, yes I mean why wouldn't you do this kind of project? Everyone makes mistakes and stuff. Think it's important that if you get caught or arrested on a low level thing you aren't labelled for the rest of your life. Triage is an opportunity and it's important to take it.

Male, 21 years old, student

To be honest I thought the workshop was great. It was very challenging and it made me think a lot. I kept thinking about what possessed me to get so drunk and to be so horrible and now I understand a bit more about how drink affects you... yes I think I will go out but I need to understand my limits and walk away if I think something bad is going to happen... What a great day, thanks so much to everyone.

Female, 24 years old, student

There is little doubt that the interventions that the 18-25 Project makes do make an impact on the young people. Clearly it will be important to track

progress against the commitments these young people are expressing over time. In the meantime their intention to reform their behaviour is clear.

The guest speakers also see the benefits of the workshops:

I get the strong impression that there are a lot of young people who are grateful for this opportunity, who understand the seriousness of their situation and who make changes as a result of seeing their 'red flags' and doing something about them.

Probation Officer at Divert Workshop

Sometimes I wonder what I'll get when I come and do my talk but I never fail to be impressed by the way in which the young people engage. They ask insightful questions and it makes me realise that they are really listening and taking notice. If I can make them think that's great and today wow, what a session that was. Really good and I have got such a buzz from their response not just to my story but the way they spoke about looking after their own mental health.

Volunteer with Time to Change Wales at MAC Workshop
www.timetochangewales.org.uk

And they have identified some ideas for consideration as the 18-25 Teams develop new ideas and ways of working:

Sometimes it feels like our partnership contact with Triage is 'formal' in nature. It feels a bit ad hoc at times and raises some questions for me. For example, do they have a vision they are working towards, where they want to be in 5 years time and how they are going to get there? The agencies involved could share practice more. Don't get me wrong this is a strong project and I want my comments to help improve an already strong commitment.

Guest speaker talking about sharing and developing practice.

Conclusion

The workshops are very impactful and make a considerable contribution to the effectiveness of the Adult Community Resolution. They represent excellent practice and both staff teams work hard to vary and develop the content. The MAC team are looking at developing the violence workshop further and are always looking for new external speakers to broaden the experience. The DIVERT team are also looking at developing their workshops and are developing bespoke films to use and again want to extend the breadth of external speakers. In many ways there is much to applaud but it is surprising that the MAC and DIVERT teams have not so far had the opportunity to observe each other's practice and learn from their respective approaches.

Recommendation 6

The MAC and DIVERT teams should arrange to observe, shadow and learn from each other's workshop practice to assist the development of future interventions, to discuss practice challenges and to inform new approaches.

Recommendation 7

The MAC and DIVERT teams should call together all the guest speakers and partner organisations that attend the workshops with a view to discussing the way in which their interventions work currently and to explore opportunities to develop new approaches. This could also be an opportunity to feedback to them about the progress being made, to share evaluations and to outline future plans and should involve the Police and Crime Commissioner's team, the operational policing team, Probation and the Youth Justice Board.

7. 18 -25 Individual Support – Practice Observation

A significant part of the success of the Adult Community Resolution relies on the relationship that the young adult is able to form with their 18-25 Project Worker. This begins at their first meeting at the Screening Assessment and continues as the primary relationship throughout. We have seen elsewhere in this review how the Project Worker's utilise youth work skills to build that relationship. Without the establishment of trust and respect between the young adult and the Project Worker all the interventions undertaken would be far less effective.

All the young people are aware that they can contact their Project Worker and many reported positively about how much they have valued that relationship.

I can't speak highly enough of her (Project Worker). She has given me confidence and I do trust her. She listens to what I have to say and she makes me feel good about myself. I've always been under confident but with her help I am really starting to think for myself ... she has been available when I need to talk to her and she took me to my first (GP) appointment.
Female, aged 20 years, employed

She (Project Worker) takes no prisoners mind. She was quick to put me right when I needed it. Top work really particularly when I thought I had pissed her off (for missing an appointment), I was told straight up that I couldn't mess her up again and I didn't and to be fair she has helped me so much.
Male, aged 21 years, student

At the Screening Assessment and as the relationship develops the young people do identify their own support needs. Many are able to be signposted or referred to particular agencies for support but others require considerable input to recognise a support need and or to take up the services of a specialist provider.

Both the MAC and DIVERT Teams have fostered excellent relationships on a partnership basis to access services and support and to make referrals. Education and training specialists, accommodation and housing advisors as well as mental health, alcohol and substance misuse voluntary organisations and counselling services are among the referrals made. The DIVERT Team benefits from being placed within the local authority setting and is able to discuss individual cases where they are known to social services, housing or education colleagues.

Input on mental health in a safe workshop environment, and the relationship they build with their own Project Worker, has given the young people involved confidence to talk about their own experience of poor mental health. This has included discussion about depression, anxiety and stress, worries about being bi-polar, experience of domestic violence and coping with bereavement.

I listened to that women talk about her own story (in the Consequences of Crime Workshop) and she was brave to say it like. But then I thought is that what I've had. Am I bi-polar? I don't know but I think I get down, depressed like and this has helped me and now (my Triage Project Worker) has given me the confidence to go to the Doctor and talk about it.

Male, 21 years old, student

One young person spoke of their need for counselling following the death of their father:

It helped me to talk about my Dad and how much I miss him. I have spoken to my girlfriend about it and she has helped me but I've never spoken to anyone else about it and how much I wish I could go back and talk with him ... She (the Project Worker) has sorted out some counselling and I'm going to go. I'm a bit scared about it mind, but I'm definitely going to go ... I don't think I would have ever asked for help if I hadn't been arrested and come to Triage. That's a bit mental isn't it?

Male, 22 years old, employed

Other young people have disclosed experience of domestic violence when they were children and how that has shaped some of their own behaviours:

After I saw that, when this bloke who wasn't my Dad lived with us and hit me Mum and my sister, I was too little to do anything but I felt angry like. I still think about it and sometimes my anger gets the better of me and I hit things. I hit this bloke in the pub and that's why I'm here... Triage has spoken to me about it and I've had a session with this other guy (a counsellor arranged by MAC) and he was good ... I've got stuff to do ...yeh, I feel like maybe I can take some control.

Male 20 years old, student

Other young people have recognised that their own alcohol or substance misuse has become problematic and have accepted referrals to specialist support services:

I knew I drank a lot but now I can see I've got a problem. Maybe I'm on the road to an addiction I don't know but my Uncle had alcohol problems and died from liver disease. I don't want that to happen to me ... they always say you have to be motivated yourself to make change happen and I can see that now. I want to get better.

Male 24 years old, employed

If I'm honest I know I use too much (cocaine) but what I usually do is say fuck off there is no way I'm on anything ... it is a mugs game but when you are caught up its hard ... yes I'm still using but I'm getting help now thanks to (Triage Project Worker) ... its early days like but at least I'm being honest now.

Female, 22 years old, employed

The Project Workers have reported that from time to time safeguarding concerns have emerged in their work involving family members who are children or vulnerable adults. No disclosures of this kind emerged in the review but it is clear from interviews with both staff teams that they are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and have made referrals to social services or the police as required.

Other young people have had more practical support needs like being homelessness or needing advice on accommodation and housing issues:

I've been doing that sofa surfing for years now. When I left care and that was a shit experience I got no help and went to a hostel, then (slept) on the streets for a while before I stayed on people's sofas. I've got my own place now but it's a crappy bedsit so I have asked if they (DIVERT) can help me. They have said they will so that's great.

Male 23 years old, unemployed

Others need employment or training support:

I've got a job but I hate it. I would like to retrain if I can but I don't know how or what my options are... I've been drinking and I know that's because I feel, I don't know ... trapped and in a shitty job that's getting me nowhere. If they can help me with some training or something that would be great.

Male, 21 years old, employed.

These examples are not exhaustive but are illustrative of the range of support needs that are presented. The strength of the partnership nature of this project is evident and is really important so that the support needs that young people identify can be addressed in a substantial and meaningful way.

The model being used by the Project Worker once a support need is identified is to work with the young person on resolving the issue using external referrals as required. This requires an assessment to be made by the Project Worker on the young person's motivation for change and ability to make external appointments. This means that Project Workers do get involved in quite a lot of *hand holding* to ensure the young person makes appointments on time and participates fully. The nature of this work can result in some cases remaining open for months. In most cases this does appear to be appropriate but care must be taken to make sure that the young person does not build a dependency upon the Project Worker.

Conclusion

The individual support needs that are identified are significant and varied. This work plays a very strong part in the desistance model being used and makes a practical contribution to addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). Without addressing the young person's support needs, where they are identified, the work on consequences of crime, restorative practice and victim impact would not be anywhere near as effective. This work is important

in sustaining long-term changes in behaviour, circumstances and lifestyle choices.

Recommendation 8

When a Project Worker refers a young person to an external agency for support or intervention they should encourage attendance or accompany the young person to the first appointment if needed. The Project Worker should not normally provide continued support beyond the first appointment unless agreed by their manager.

8. Alcohol and lifestyle choices

In the workshop sessions there has been some good input from the Project Workers and guest speakers on alcohol and substance misuse and mental health.

In group discussion it is interesting to note the significance that alcohol has in young people's lives. The young people have been very honest in their discussions and have been keen to describe their levels of consumption and lifestyle choices.

Many referred to their lives as being characterised by eating well and understanding the importance of *clean living*. For example, most of the young people talk about regular exercise, going to the gym, looking after their physical appearance and wearing the right clothes. There is no distinction here in the way in which young men and women talk about the importance of grooming and lifestyle. This extends to diet where many of the young men talked of eating chicken and broccoli and drinking water all week supplemented by protein and vitamin shakes so that they can maximise their work in the gym. Getting regular exercise is important and gym routines support other physical activities like playing team sports or enjoying active lifestyles outdoors.

All this is very positive except their lives are also routinely subject to regular, sometimes weekly, binge-drinking episodes where drinking to get drunk is a normal activity. The level of alcohol consumption is concerning in itself as is the culture that surrounds excessive drinking. Young people can access cheap alcohol in supermarkets to drink at home and mix their drinks using beer, lager, spirits by the bottle and cocktails.

As a result many of these young people talk about a lifestyle that is characterised with serious binge drinking, recovery and *clean living* diets on a regular basis for most weeks of the year. There seems to be very little distinction in the lifestyles enjoyed by those who are students or in regular employment. Of course what the majority of the young people have had to accept on the 18-25 Project is that their offending behaviour corresponds exactly with their binge drinking and their relationship with alcohol.

The discussions have also included how initiation ceremonies in sports clubs and university or college bars have played a part in encouraging their drinking. For example, young people who refer to extreme initiation drinking rituals in sports clubs, pre drinks at home before going clubbing late at night, drinking so much that once you are sick you create space for more drink, drink the bar dry nights promoted by various student bars and pubs and clubs, drinking games or being unable to avoid drinking because of peer pressure.

In one discussion the reviewer intervened:

“Hold on a minute. Let me get this right. At your (sports) club you have regular initiations. You are telling me that they start by being told that you have to drink to get drunk. You drink so much that you then put your finger down your throat so that you are sick into a pint glass. You then have to drink the vomit. You are then made to run around the pitch with your underpants on so your teammates and coaches can throw things at you. Then sometimes but not always the initiation includes having a chocolate bar inserted in your bum before you eat it and drink some more. That is awful. It’s abusive isn’t it? If you were under 18 I would be making a child protection referral and reporting your club”,

Well, yeh, when you put it like that you could call it abuse but it isn’t is it cos we all do it. We have to do it like. It’s about respect.

Male, 22 years old employed

“You say this is about getting respect and yet you can see that all this does is humiliate and abuse you. Why do you do it?”

If you don’t do it you won’t play ... you won’t be picked, It’s all part of making the team work so you have got to do it otherwise they are just going to rip you apart and take the piss. It is about respect and about being accepted

Male, 20 years old, student

There is something quite disturbing in some of these accounts about the coercive nature of initiation and drinking rituals and their impact on long term drinking and societal norms for young people in certain settings. Although the initiation described above is an extreme example the role of initiations in some of our sports clubs (rugby, football) and in some University and College bars are of concern and should be addressed. These organisations must place corporate responsibility above commercial considerations and be accountable for the environment they are creating.

Recommendation 9

This review highlights concerns about the coercive nature of initiation and drinking rituals. The South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner should raise awareness of these practices with the Wales Rugby Union, the Football Association of Wales, Sports Wales and with Universities, Colleges and Students Unions and discuss the practical application of the safeguarding and well-being responsibilities they have for the young people who attend their provision.

9. 18 -25 Victim Work and Restorative Practice – Practice Observation

This part of the evaluation has been the most problematic to address. During the course of the review not one victim agreed to be part of a face-to-face meeting with the young adult who offended against them. There have not been any victim offender conferences and the victims have demonstrated very little appetite for entering into a contact with the young people on the 18-25 Project.

The reasons for this are explored below but it is worth noting that the Project Workers do all they can to initiate victim engagement and approach every case with a restorative focus. Their work with the young people who have offended secures agreement from them to take part in a restorative intervention with any harmed person or persons to repair and harm caused. This work could range from the following:

- A restorative conference (face to face meeting with the harmed person).
- Shuttle mediation (where the 18-25 Team facilitate contact by relaying messages from the victim to the offender).
- Writing a letter of apology to the victim.
- Responding to the Victim Impact Statement.
- Completing community reparation

The MAC and DIVERT Teams are both trained in restorative justice and there is considerable emphasis on this in the consequence of crime workshops and in the individual one to one work with the young people who have offended. MAC are also able to utilise the expertise from their Victim Team who have developed a considerable level of restorative justice expertise in their work with juvenile offenders (under 18 years of age) and their victims.

Victims Perspective

Only seven victims took the opportunity offered to speak with the reviewer. All seven interviews were conducted over the telephone. It would be fair to say that their experience of the support offered by the Project Workers is largely very positive. They all refer to being kept in contact with and were very clear about the 18-25 process and what it was trying to achieve. Some spoke about the support they received from the Project Workers and reported that it helped to speak with them about what happened, how they have been affected by the offence and what help they might need to move on with their lives.

This is broadly consistent with the feedback that the MAC Team receive in the Restorative Justice Victim Questionnaire analysis they undertake. In two quarter evaluations¹ they noted that out of 23 victims who returned a form six asked for a letter of apology, one opted for shuttle mediation, two asked for community reparation and two indicated they would be involved in a

¹ MAC RJ Victim Questionnaire Evaluation Quarter 2 (Jul Aug Sep 2016) and (Oct, Nov, Dec 2016)

conference (these have not yet happened). Their reported satisfaction levels are quite high 13 felt strongly that they could move on since the offence, 10 felt strongly that they were a part of the process, 8 were strongly in agreement that they had been supported by the Triage Team.

Some of the other comments they made included:

Very impressed at the Triage for the victim and the offender – didn't know it existed.
Very satisfied.
Very happy with the way I was kept informed.
Felt supported and fully updated.
Happy with the support although just needed the offender to learn from his actions.
The letter (from the offender) helped me to understand why the offender committed the offence.
It is a waste of public money.

In the DIVERT Team they too record the contact with victims and were able to report that during Quarter 1 and 2 for 2016 their work involved 25 victims all of whom had a letter from the DIVERT Team. Five of the victims wanted a letter of apology from the offender, five wanted shuttle mediation, one did request a conference but then decided against it, four said they did not want any restorative justice intervention and 10 did not respond,

In the telephone discussions that the reviewer had with the victims none wanted any direct contact with the offender. The reasons for this were quite varied and included:

I don't want anything to do with him. I don't know who he is and I don't want to know... I know that they are helping him and that's fine but there is no way I'm doing that.
Victim of a violence offence

I was drunk as well and the ruck we had could have gone either way. He was arrested like and I was on the floor ... not sure meeting him would achieve anything
Victim of a violence offence

To be honest I think this is a complete waste of money. How seriously is he going to take this? He's got away with it as far as I'm concerned and I don't want anything to do with it.
Victim of a violence offence

Some of the other observations from victims included:

This has done him no good whatsoever. I know him and he has just got away with this. I don't agree with the approach. It should have been court, he would have learned something then alright. I know his character and it wouldn't make any difference. If I had agreed there would have been comeback for my daughter and I wasn't going to do that.

Victim of violence offence

I do agree with this approach. I think its so much better to focus on putting things right and supporting them. A criminal record doesn't do anyone any favours so if this approach works I think that's great. I didn't ask for a letter or anything. I didn't want it. To be honest it didn't feel right to have a meeting. He was my boyfriend. In a different situation I might have wanted a letter but not with this.

Victim of violence offence

I just didn't want to get involved. I'd had enough. It could be a good thing not to go to court but only if it works but I'll never know will I? No, I don't want to get involved like but I hope it does work for him.

Victim of drunk and disorderly behaviour

To be honest I don't think this has made one bit of difference. I was under the impression from (Project Worker) that everything would get sorted and his mental health needs would be met (offender was her son). This (counselling service) is not going to work for him and now I'm told he needs to go to his GP but there is no way he will do that. I think they are offering him something else, counselling or something. I don't know if this is going to improve things. To be honest nothings changed he keep abusing me and if I threaten to phone the police again he begs me not to. Not sure how much more we can take. Don't get me wrong he's Ok. He's got a job he got himself after college but he does not respect me and his attitude hasn't changed. To be honest I've not seen any change. It's bad, when I phoned the police he had his hands round my throat. I feel guilty I called the police but something has to change. Can't go on like this. Maybe it's too early to see if its helped him. I think he has mental health needs but if they say he has to go to the doctor himself it ain't going to happen. I don't know if this has helped or not. I just don't know.

Victim of an offence by a family member

Time will tell if this way of working has value. It's good to deal with these things quickly and if avoiding the criminal justice system helps that's good but we will need to see if it works. The (18-25) team tell me this has not been going that long so how do we know it will work or not? They say nearly all the young people complete it but we'll have to see. I've not met the young person so I don't know about impact on him. They told me he was upset when he heard that taking the keyboard meant that other young people missed their

rehearsals. I don't know if the letter (of apology) is meaningful or whether he's going through the motions. I can't tell, but we've got it.

Victim – representative of a community centre burglary

I'm 47 and she is the same age as my daughter. She punched me in the back of the head and I fell to the ground, hurt my elbow and was pretty shaken up. I had to have seven weeks off work. They (18-25 Project) offered me a face to face with her (assailant) but I didn't want to see her again. She (Project Worker) has been brilliant and told me how this works (reference to the restorative approach). When I read it (letter of apology) I was really angry. It was handwritten on a ruled piece of A4. In it she said she was drunk and was sorry but it just didn't feel genuine to me. It felt like she was going through the motions. Doing what she had to do to get off with it. I don't know what to think really but it doesn't feel to me that she has taken anything on board. The letter is not genuine. I'm sorry but that's how I feel. Her attitude is not right. ... She's young and I don't know what's going on in her life. I hope she learns from this but, you know, I'm just not convinced she has. I hope I'm wrong but I don't think I am. That letter didn't help me. It made me angry.

Victim of a violence offence.

These testimonies from the victims do not make for positive reading. In many ways they are characterised by poor satisfaction levels and an uncertainty about whether any significant impact has been made on the offender. None of them wanted any direct involvement although some had received a letter of apology.

The sample is too small to determine whether these are representative of the victim experience but they do indicate that a lot more work is required to increase victim participation in restorative justice with the 18 – 25 age group.

Recommendation 10

More work needs to be done to both understand the low level of victim participation in restorative justice and then to increase participation levels by:

1. Understanding why victims engage more readily in Restorative Justice for the under-18 age group and whether parental involvement plays any significant part.
2. Conducting a general awareness raising campaign using local and regional media to increase the public's understanding of restorative practice and the role of the 18-25 Project in Bridgend, Cardiff, Swansea and Cwm Taf.
3. Recording more fully the work that MAC and DIVERT actually undertake in supporting victims via Project Worker contact.
4. Reviewing the letters that are sent to victims and trying different engagement techniques including asking directly for a face to face meeting between the Project Worker and the victim rather than relying on telephone, text and email contact.

Letters of Apology and Impact Statements

All the young people who spoke to the reviewer had written a letter of apology to their direct victim, to the police if their victim was not identified and or had drafted impact statements so that they could fully explore the circumstances that led to their offending behaviour, their motivation and influences, and how their offending impacts on their lives and the lives of others.

The reviewer has witnessed the direct one to one work the young people and Project Workers do to draft these letters and statements and concludes that they are meaningful and a powerful way for the young person to fully accept responsibility for their actions. They express disappointment and remorse, an understanding of what happened and an apology.

Many of the young people referred to how difficult it was to do this work. To recognise your own weakness or thoughtlessness, to acknowledge that you had hurt someone and to genuinely express sorrow. All hoped that what they had written would be taken seriously by the recipient and when this resulted in a response from the victim via shuttle mediation, whether positive or negative, it made quite an impact on them.

This work is critical to the restorative practice approach and is meaningful to the young person who committed the offence. The emphasis that the Project Workers place on this work and its completion is very often the final piece of work that the young person performs. Many of the young people are proud of what they have done and most leave the 18-25 Project having completed the commitment they made at the outset.

There are many examples of letters and statements that could have been included by way of example in this report. This Impact Statement was the last one received by the reviewer and is illustrative of the many that have been written.

Dear South Wales Police,

About a month ago I was out with friends, drinking excessively, when I lost my friends and proceeded to try and go home. Incidentally I ended up trying to get into the house that my current housemates used to live in, in a state of complete confusion. I banged on the door, shouted loudly and aggressively and when I couldn't get in I decided to urinate on the door, genius. At the time I was so incomprehensively drunk and incapacitated that I had no use of rational or logical thought, the fact that I believed I lived in my housemates old house epitomises the stupefied state I was in. This, however, is no excuse. It may be the reason but it is in no way an excuse for such irresponsible and inconsiderate action.

My friends fail to see anything other than the funny side of the offence, likely as they aren't the people that live in the house or the houses adjacent to the one that I attempted to get into. Anyone could have lived there, a family with a

baby or young children, a vulnerable elderly person or a person with serious illness. My actions would not only have affected the residents at the immediate time but could have caused significant trauma and/or anxiety, paranoia and they are therefore a lot more serious than given credit for.

Alcohol is a big part of some people's lives, mine included as a student, but unless I can learn how to engage in drinking responsibly and stick to my limits then I shouldn't be drinking. At the age of 21 it's an embarrassment that I haven't already got a handle on it.

I am unfathomably grateful for being allowed to participate in the triage scheme. I don't believe that I am a bad person overall, this just happened to be a considerable lapse in judgement and responsibility. Therefore, to be granted a second chance by the South Wales Police is something I will be eternally grateful. Also, the Triage team who helped me through the scheme deserve considerable acknowledgement. For their meticulous and friendly approach to the scheme, and for making me feel exactly as I am: not a recidivist destined for multiple convictions but simply a massive idiot who made a big mistake that had the potential to affect a lot of lives. Knowledge is power and education is the key to help people similar to me in the event of minor offences.

*Yours sincerely,
RD*

10. Steering Group and Stakeholder Organisations

The 18-25 Project is a partnership that has been initiated and led by the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales and supported by the operational Police team. It would be nowhere near as effective if it did not take a partnership approach and the role the Steering Group plays is a very important one. Meetings have happened each quarter and attendance is good.

The MAC and DIVERT Teams provide helpful progress statistically based reports which detail the numbers and profile of the 18 – 25 year olds who they work with, the offence profiles and the practice issues and challenges that they work to overcome².

The members of the Steering Group have demonstrated a commitment to the work and offer professional challenge now that the work is well established and firmly underway.

By way of example, at one meeting members debated at some length the bail or no bail voluntary engagement issue addressed in this report by Recommendation 1. above. The debate was robust, could not reach a resolution based on consensus but has provided a sound opportunity to inform and develop policy proposals for the South Wales Police area.

Future Development of the Steering Group

Strategic governance of the South Wales Police 18-25 project sits with the Police and Crime Commissioner and with the South Wales Criminal Justice and Integrated Offender Management Board, the purpose of which is to act as the principal board in South Wales, providing governance and strategic direction for criminal and social justice partners, ensuring the effective delivery of outcomes to reduce crime and reoffending and to deliver the service ensuring resources are used efficiently.

It was however, acknowledged during the early development of the 18-25 project that local operational steer was needed; in order for 18-25 practitioners to become fully networked with all key agencies within the police service and with external partners; and for project delivery to become embedded in and aligned to existing arrangements for the management of offenders and community based intervention and support.

Whilst the steering group has ensured consistency during the developmental stage of the project, allowing practitioners to become effectively networked with police and other colleagues, it has been recognised that there are existing arrangements within which the operational steer of the project could sit going forward, in order to avoid duplication and free up time spent in

² Monitoring reports by the MAC Triage 18-25 Project and the Divert 18-25 Project are available upon request.

meetings. For example the General Custody Users Group, and both YOT Boards and IOM Management Boards. The YOS & IOM Management Boards of the Cwm Taff Local Authority area are expected to develop into a single Board with separate agenda items merge and it is anticipated that the 18-25 project will become absorbed into this arrangement, although it is not clear whether this will be followed by similar arrangements across the force area during 2017 or subsequently.

Recommendation 11.

Governance for the 18-25 Triage Project and its Steering Group should be absorbed into the new arrangements currently under development to avoid duplication. This is being led by the Police and Crime Commissioner and developed jointly with the IOM Team, operational Policing, Probation and YOTS to ensure a robust collaborative approach is at the centre of the delivery model.

11. Team and Management Role

The reviewer conducted one to one and team interviews with the Triage Project Workers in the MAC and DIVERT teams and with their respective managers. MAC operates as a voluntary sector supplier or contractor and the DIVERT team works within a local authority setting.

Both operate professionally and support their staff with regular supervision and appraisal and provide training and support for their staff. Personal safety is given a high priority and the well being of staff is prioritised.

There were some individual issues that were raised with the reviewer but these were discussed with the respective managers and have been highlighted for internal action. None required external assistance and none reflect poorly on organisational commitment.

It is worth recording that both teams have a dedicated and professional group of practitioners and managers who take pride in their work, and who should feel, with some justification, that their work is making a positive difference to young people's lives.

12. Wider Geographical Reach for the 18 -25 Project

The other Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales are interested in what can be done to reduce offending by young people and have been promised insight into the progress of the 18-25 Project in South Wales. Some interest has also been shown by operational leaders in neighbouring Police Services because young people do not always live and offend in the same area and there are examples where young people normally resident in neighbouring police force areas (Gwent and Dyfed/Powys) have been arrested in South Wales but are not eligible for the 18-25 Project because of their home

address. The Project Workers have expressed some frustration that they are unable to offer any interventions.

The reviewer and the Project Lead for Reducing Offending and Re-Offending by 18-25 in the Office of the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner have briefed the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner in Gwent about the work of the Triage Project.

There would be considerable merit in exploring the funding and operational issues with a view to developing an all Wales diversion approach to the 18 -25 age group based on the restorative practice principles that have been successfully piloted by the South Wales 18-25 Project. This possibility has already been discussed tentatively between Police and Crime Commissioners and will be discussed with Commissioners and Chief Constables as soon as they have had an opportunity to read this report.

Recommendation 12.

Work should be undertaken to explore with the other Commissioners and Chief Constables the possibility of rolling out the 18-25 Triage approach on an all Wales basis. This might be achieved in stages starting immediately if agreement can be reached to offer this option to young people who offend in South Wales but live outside the area while exploring a potential widening of the current 18-25 Project to Gwent, Dyfed Powys and North Wales.

13. 18 -25: Purpose, Remit, Funding and Governance

Purpose and Remit

The aim of this project is to reduce re-offending by young adults in the 18-25-age range across the South Wales Police area. To replicate the success of the Youth Offending Service in creating a sustainable trend of diverting first-time offenders from re-offending.

The key outcomes that the 18-25 Project is working towards include:

- To reduce offending in the 18-25 age group
- To reduce re-offending in the 18-25 age group
- To take a consistent victim centred approach
- To use resources efficiently and effectively
- To develop and deliver an effective diversionary scheme for the 18-25 age group
- To increase public confidence

The approach is based on:

- Empowering young adults to take control of their own lives and make positive contributions to their communities.

- Reducing the number of 18-25s who commit offences leading to arrest by 25% in Year 2 of the Project (2017-2018).
- To apply the principles of youth work and youth offending work to the 18-25 age group.
- To utilise restorative justice models, focussing on the victim's needs, confidence and satisfaction.
- To identify opportunities for sustainability (funding and resources).
- To identify where the criminal justice system fails to effectively support and rehabilitate young adults.

Measures of Success

The Triage 18-25 Project has set a number of success measures. These include:

- Reduce first time offending.
- Reduce re-offending.
- Reduce need for the use of custody.
- Number of repeat offenders reduced through engagement.
- Number of first time entrants reduced due to effective preventative partnership work.
- Knowledge and understanding of the needs of 18-25 age group among police officers / police staff significantly raised.
- Demonstrated / evidenced cost savings.
- Resources utilised more efficiently / effectively.
- 'Preventative Partnerships' embedded in the criminal justice system.
- Effective model for holistic needs assessments of offenders identified and utilised at heart of early interventions procedures.
- Improved 'out of hours' support for 18-25 age group.
- Improved mechanisms for crisis / prevention and relapse.
- Equality of access significantly improved for 18-25 age group in the following service areas:
 - Appropriate accommodation
 - Claiming the right benefits
 - Education and training
 - Employment and volunteering
 - Substance misuse services
 - Mental health services
- Offenders more likely to continue engagement with services.
- Reduction in the amount of money spent on young offenders across the board.
- Established links with local employers to promote employment opportunities.
- Outcomes for victims significantly improved.
- Fear of crime significantly reduced / public confidence increased.
- Positive public consultation response in relation to fear and confidence.
- Youth services supported to maintain capacity.

- 18-25 age group empowered to take control of their lives and make positive contributions to society.
- Fear and stigma of 18-25 age group significantly reduced in South Wales communities.

Funding

This enormously collaborative project drew on the success of Youth Offending Teams in reducing offending in the under 18-age group. This project sought to replicate that success with what is now the most prolific group of offenders, 18 to 25 years olds, and builds upon the successful Police Innovation Fund bids for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16; which established 2 pilot schemes focussing on reducing re-offending in the 18-21 age group in Bridgend County Borough and a one year 18-25 Triage pilot at Cardiff Bridewell. The approach taken in the pilot schemes was consistent with desistance-based working and was appropriately targeted on police-referred participants. As such, in conformity with the wider criminological literature, a positive long - term impact of the project was posited.

A robust, academic evaluation of the Bridgend 18-21 pilot made some key recommendations for the extension this work across the South Wales Police area, and helped to fully comprehend that desistance involves a re - definition of an offender's identity and the acquirement of the capacities as well as opportunities for leading a more conventional life:

- A desistance intervention project needs to be based on a clear theoretical model of change. Desistance theory offers good opportunities for providing such a workable model.
- A longer time - frame is required for service delivery and to achieve realistic objectives in terms of desistance from offending and the building of positive outcomes.
- Desistance is a process which required a long period of time potentially stretching over multiple years rather than months

The aim of tackling offending in the 18-25 age group has been central to the Commissioner's approach since he was first elected in 2012. The opportunity to use the Police Innovation Fund was seized in order to significantly accelerate this work but the final points above amount to acknowledgement that the 18-25 project would outlive the lifespan and no longer fit the remit of the Innovation Fund. A business case was therefore submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner in December 2016, recommending further funding for 1 year in order to fully analyse the data gathered following roll-out of the 18-25 Triage scheme across the entire force area between March 2016-2017. This was supported by the Commissioner and by the Chief Constable.

Governance

A multi agency Steering Group met quarterly during 2016 and oversees the running of the Project receiving regular written reports from MAC and the

DIVERT Team. The Steering Group is chaired by the Project Lead for Reducing Offending and Re-offending by the 18-25 Age Group in the Office of the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner.

The terms of reference for the Steering Group state that their purpose is to provide operational direction and critical feedback for the 18-25 diversion pilots; to provide and co-ordinate information and expertise to ensure successful delivery; and to ensure performance and delivery is challenged robustly through a support and challenge methodology.

Its principal functions therefore are to monitor and evaluate effectiveness, to promote collaborative working practice across statutory and voluntary partners, and for members to provide feedback to their respective organisations and partnerships and to be responsible for ensuring appropriate engagement, communication and consultation in their respective organisations and areas of responsibility.

The membership of the Steering Group consists of representatives from across South Wales including (but not exclusive to): Youth Offending Services, Probation Service, Local Authority, Police and Crime Commissioners Office, the Third Sector and the Strategic and Operational Departments of South Wales Police. These include Justice Services, IOM Teams, Territorial Policing Hubs and Public Protection Departments, which demonstrates a significant level of buy-in and enthusiasm for the Project and ensures that Triage staff are fully networked across all relevant departments.

There are some operational differences between the commissioned model managed by MAC and the delivery model operated by DIVERT within a local authority. The principles that both models work are broadly similar and provide an interesting comparison that the evaluation explores.

Media Academy Cardiff (MAC)

Media Academy Cardiff was established to provide a service across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan in April 2010. It is a not for profit voluntary organisation working with children and young people who may need extra support. A dedicated and multi-disciplinary team work with up to 1000 young people a year. They have centres in Cardiff and Barry, working in partnership with approximately 150 statutory and voluntary agencies. Their programmes primarily work with children and young people not in traditional forms of education and also young people who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. They have a very active arts programme providing free activities (drama, music and singing) to up to 100 children a year.

Their educational programmes aim to equip young people with the skills and motivation to either return to school or to make a positive transition to training or employment.

Their 18-25 Triage Project covers the Bridewells in Cardiff, Bridgend and Swansea (local authority areas also include Neath Port Talbot and the Vale of

Glamorgan) and aims to divert young people from offending and stop them getting stigmatised with a criminal record. The work at MAC is regularly cited as an exceptional provision by youth justice agencies and educational establishments across the UK. They have won a number of awards for their work including three Welsh Government Youth Excellence Awards with the 18-25 Project winning in 2016 in the Health and Wellbeing of Young People category. Most recently, MAC has officially been awarded the Restorative Justice Quality Mark. Nineteen members of the team are now registered practitioners on the Restorative Justice Council approved practitioner list.

There are six Triage 18-25 Case Managers covering the Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea Bridewells. They are supervised and supported by the Criminal Justice Service Manager in MAC. The Case Managers are co-located at MAC and in South Wales Police police stations.

DIVERT 18-25 (Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC)

The Cwm Taf DIVERT 18-25 Team form part of the Community Safety Team hosted by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. Being placed within the local authority has allowed the work to link strategically and contribute to the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) “Delivery Change for R.C.T.’ within which offender management and tackling offending are key delivery strands. The Team’s work contributes directly to the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Police and Crime Reduction Plan as well as other key partnership programmes such as the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru and the Cwm Taf IOM Steering and Delivery Groups.

The DIVERT 18-25 Team have developed strong links across the local authority and with partner agencies including South Wales Police, the National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company, the Women’s Pathfinder, the Youth Offending Service and a range of local voluntary sector organisations.

There are two 18-25 Project Co-ordinators covering Cwm Taf who are managed and supported by the Project Development Officer in the Community Safety Team. They work from two locations in the Council offices and in the South Wales Police Merthyr Bridewell.

14. Diversion Policy – South Wales Police

Whilst the evidence base for this work is not as clearly established in the 18-25 age group, the correlation between the situation of these offenders and those under 18 is very strong. Those aged 18-25 are still young, often struggling with the transition to adulthood and can be drawn into early parenthood which can be the start of the next cycle.

The focus of this project is very specifically on cutting offending. The risks to the successful completion of this project predominantly lie with stakeholder

engagement and partnership working, as there is no legal framework to support or 'enforce' new ways of working with the 18-25 age group.

The approach established and mandated by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act has delivered consistent improvements in the under-18 age group year after year. While cross agency and inter-professional team approach is mandated in law only for that younger age group, the factors affecting offending and re-offending appear even more susceptible in the post-18 age group with issues like alcohol, mental health, housing, parental responsibilities and the search for a job complicating the lives of those vulnerable to being drawn into crime. The challenge is to adapt the success of the Youth Offending Service to a different age group. The approach has been consistent with the crime reduction elements of the Police Reform Act 2011, and the aim was to demonstrate that even without mandation in law the right teamwork operating on evidence and refining practice on the basis of experience can have a similar and progressive impact on the older age group.

The project ultimately aims to clear away the traditional boundaries where offenders could only be dealt with through the formal criminal justice system. The clear focus is on stopping the offending through challenging and early intervention, and reaching a stage where young adult offenders will not have to enter the custody environment unless it is for a serious offence. As a result, it is suggested, Police resources and the resources of other agencies will then be far more effectively targeted on dealing with incidents that cannot be prevented.

This project has synergy with the IOM Cymru Women's Pathfinder – a diversionary pilot for adult (18+) female offenders and has worked alongside the IOM delivery team to ensure consistency of development. Existing IOM structures will be further utilised to engage relevant stakeholders, ensuring a high level of partnership consultation informs the model.

Diversion and pre-charge Bail

Since March 2016, the 1825 project has been testing two separate operating models in terms of pre-charge bail with a view to measuring engagement rates:

1. In Swansea, Bridgend and Cardiff, young adults, following a decision to divert by custody sergeant, is bailed to a 'bail back day' for 1825 Triage screening. Following a decision regarding their suitability to participate in the scheme, the young adult's bail will end
2. In Merthyr the young adult is retained on bail until the completion of a series of community based interventions

There is significant evidence from similar practice across the UK, to suggest that re-offending rates when young people took responsibilities for their actions were lower than where there is a coercive element of continued bail, or a forced intervention by fear of being punished with a criminal record.

In April 2017 changes to the law in relation to pre-charge bail will come into force following reforms set out in the Policing and Crime Bill 2015, a development which will introduce a presumption in favour of releasing a suspect without bail, with bail only being imposed when it is both necessary and proportionate. This is consistent with Recommendation 1. above.

At the time of writing, South Wales Police are exploring the options with regard to custody based diversion schemes in terms of what disposal options are available for use in such circumstances.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-introduces-policing-and-crime-bill>

15. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)

In 2015 Public Health Wales published their work on Adverse Childhood Experiences³ or ACE's. It found that adults in Wales who were physically or sexually abused as children or brought up in households where there was domestic violence, alcohol or drug abuse are more likely to adopt health harming and anti social behaviours in adult life. In some ways it reinforced earlier studies that demonstrated the impact of early life experiences on poor health outcomes and the likelihood of risky behaviour and crime, but by quantifying the risks in Wales the report has had an impact on Welsh Government and on leaders in a number of public bodies including the police. It was significant that Public Health Wales asked the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales to join their Chief Executive in launching the report. A doctor or a nurse may appear different from a police officer or a probation officer, but they are dealing as responders to the effects of the same root causes.

Results from the first Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) study in Wales showed that suffering four or more harmful experiences in childhood increases the chances of high risk drinking in adulthood by four times, being a smoker by six times and committing a violent act in the last year by around 14 times. The survey found that around one in every seven adults aged 18-69 years in Wales had experienced four or more ACEs during their childhood and just under half had experienced at least one.

South Wales Police are one of many agencies who have learned from this research to inform their early intervention, prevention and partnership plans. The headline message from the Chief Constable and the Commissioner promotes "Early Intervention and Prompt Positive Action".

³ Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population. Alcohol use, drug use, violence, sexual behavior, incarceration, smoking and poor diet. 2015 Public Health Wales NHS Trust. ISBN 978-1-910768-23-5

Welcoming the research, Alun Michael the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales said:

This report is yet another clear signal to every profession and every public body that it is vital to tackle the root causes of harm and adversity instead of struggling to pick up pieces when it is far too late. This new piece of work injects fresh urgency into the early intervention agenda ... As a professional youth worker I saw far too many youngsters whose childhood had been ruined by a bad start in life instead of growing up in a happy, loving environment. Sadly the police are faced day in and day out with the consequences – but there does seem to be a fresh sense of purpose across the public sector in Wales today, and that is why we are working closely with Public Health Wales to promote early intervention and prompt positive action... It's not just that much of the demand faced by our police officers today involves responding to families and individuals experiencing these kind of adversities, it's that a proactive approach can prevent much of the misery that is caused. By putting early intervention and joint working in the heart of the new Police and Crime Plan for South Wales, we want to ensure that our officers are part of an action to intervene earlier and more effectively.⁴

The work of the 18 – 25 Project directly contributes to prompt positive intervention when young adults commit a first time offence by addressing many of the ACE indicators that are presented when disclosures are made.

16. Qualitative Review Methodology

Purpose and context

The specification for the qualitative review of the 18-25 Project set out specific elements that needed to be completed. The purpose of the evaluation is:

To carry out a holistic, non-academic evaluation of the 18-25 Triage Project across the South Wales Police area, in accordance with the requirements of the evaluation plan agreed by the Home Office Police Innovation Fund.⁵

This evaluation report is in addition to other evaluation work referred to in the Police Innovation Fund bid for 2016/16 & 2016/17:

- Academically supported evaluation of the Court Support Project 2014/14, carried out by mental health charity Hafal (completed).
- Academically supported evaluation of the Bridgend 18-21 YOS Pilot 2013/14, carried out by Swansea University (completed).
- Project supported by external Criminal Justice Consultancy in order to guide and advise the Project Lead in early stage.

⁴ Alun Michael, South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, 13/01/2016 NHS Wales Public Health Wales Press Release

⁵ Contract for the Provision of Evaluation of the 18-25 Triage Project, 17th June 2016

The qualitative review was managed by Keith Towler who was responsible for every element including conducting all the interviews and observation sessions. The methodology included:

- Practice observation of the Screening and Assessment process at the Bridgend, Cardiff, Swansea and Merthyr Bridewell Police Stations.
- Practice observation of five Consequences of Crime Workshops in Bridgend, Cardiff, Swansea and Cwm Taf.
- Practice observation of one Violence Workshop in Swansea.
- Interviews (face to face and telephone) with young people participating in the 18-25 Project.
- Interviews (telephone) with young people and adults who were victims of an offence by a young person undertaking the ACR.
- Interviews with Project Workers and Managers at the Media Academy Centre (MAC).
- Interviews with Project Workers and Manager in the DIVERT Team in Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC.
- Interviews and discussions with individuals from stakeholder organisations.
- Attendance at the multi agency Steering Group.
- Regular meetings with the Project Lead for Reducing Offending and Re-offending by the 18-25 Age Group in the Office of the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner.

In total 70 young people participated in the evaluation and 7 victims took part via a telephone interview. Each practice observation and interview was written up and used to inform this report.

The challenge for this evaluation was to provide an assessment of the impact on the young people who complete the Adult Community Resolution, to understand their motivation for agreeing and completing the programme, to make an assessment of the impact the intervention has made on them, to make a judgement if the Adult Community Resolution has the potential to reduce further offending and to outline what additional support needs were identified and supported.

Given the significance that is placed on the youth work methodology being used and the commitment to a restorative practice approach, the evaluation also sought to provide a description of the work and to assess the victim experience.

The evaluation was also tasked with hearing the voice of the young people and adults who participated in the work as offenders or victims. The report therefore gives some emphasis to their experience in the form of edited quotes taken from the interviews and group discussions that were held.

This evaluation does not include an analysis of the statistical data produced by MAC, DIVERT and the Office of the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. The reports provided to the Triage 18-25 Project Steering Group provide a comprehensive statistical picture of the activity undertaken and a summary of this information is attached for information but is not a part of this report.

17. Conclusion

The conclusions of this review are positive and the work has established that the Triage 18-25 Project has made a considerable impact on the young people who have taken the opportunity to have an Adult Community Resolution instead of being processed through the criminal justice system to receive a criminal record via caution or court disposal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Towler". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Keith Towler

March 2017

Keith Towler Consultancy

Keith is an independent consultant offering development and service reviews. He is the former Children's Commissioner for Wales completing his seven-year term in March 2015. He began his career working in social work and youth justice for South Glamorgan Social Services, later becoming Director of Crime Reduction for NACRO and then Programme Director for Save the Children in Wales. He was a member of the Family Justice Review Panel and chaired the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Monitoring Group for Wales. Keith is the Vice Chair of the National Independent Safeguarding Board for Wales and Chairs CWVYS, the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services.

For more information:

Email: keith.towler@gmail.com

Mobile: 07983 356942

Twitter: @KeithJTowler

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/keithtowler](https://www.linkedin.com/in/keithtowler)