

## About the CHOICE Project

The CHOICE Project is a community-based resource set up to work with young offenders.

The Project provides a range of programmes for young people aged between 8-17 years of age who are involved in offending behaviour.

The main objectives of the Project are to:

- eliminate or reduce the offending behaviour of the young people referred
- offer to the Children's Reporters intensive supervision programmes as an alternative to residential or secure care.

## Referrals

Referrals come predominantly from Reporters. However, the project considers referrals from other agencies, such as Social Workers, the Children's Panel, Education Department or the Police for the Fast Track Pilot.

After a young person has been referred their needs are assessed to ensure effective targeting of offending behaviour.

The work undertaken by the CHOICE Project involves the following areas:

- serious and persistent offenders
- court and hearing overlap service
- drugs/alcohol-related offending
- "Compass" diversionary scheme for early offenders.

## Work with Persistent and Serious Offenders

This is the core client group of the CHOICE Project. The working principles of CHOICE in addressing behaviour with persistent and serious young offenders and maintaining them in the community include:

- fast tracking to ensure offending is addressed quickly and effectively
- thorough assessment using ASSET - to ensure there is an effective targeting of an individuals offending
- multi-agency co-operation - to ensure effective collaboration in tackling offending behaviour
- clear action plans and individually tailored programmes to meet specific needs and patterns of offending.

## Court and Hearing Overlap Service

It is recognized that many young people appear before adult courts. It is possible, however, for young people to be maintained in the Children's Hearing system up until the age of 18.

CHOICE has a Criminal Justice Worker whose role is to offer a service that can allow young people who offend to be retained in the Children's Hearing system as an alternative to the adult Criminal Justice system.

This post also provides Social Enquiry Reports for court and manages the Probation Orders on young people up to 17.

## Compass

Compass is aimed at children and young people who have been identified as beginning to become involved in offending behaviour.

Its aim is to help children and young people find alternatives to offending by:

- helping the offender understand the consequences of offending for them and their families.
- promoting awareness of the consequences of offending for victims and communities
- providing participants with information about activities/interests they might like to be involved in.

## Youth Drug and Alcohol Service for Looked After Young People

The service consists of a health care worker having responsibility to assess looked after young people with substance misuse issues. The service involves a partnership between the Social Work Department, Tayside Primary Health Care Trust and Dundee Drug and Alcohol Action Team.

The three main target groups are:

- young people who are looked after away from home in residential accommodation (including those who are outside Dundee)
- young people who are looked after in other community settings
- adults who are the primary carers for those who are looked after (such as parents, foster carers or keyworkers)

The aim of the project is to reduce the harm drugs and offending can cause to individuals and their communities. This includes:

- providing young people at risk with appropriate advice
- helping young people resist drug misuse
- enabling young people to develop strategies to address their drug use
- reduce the risk of drug related crime by addressing drug use

## Further Information required?

If you have any questions or wish further information please contact:

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Designed by Dundee City Council, Public Relations Office - JC/PB/08/04

