Committee: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: 27 April 2012

Title of Report: Looked After Children: Offending Protocol

By: Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report: To inform the panel of the Pan Sussex Joint Protocol to Reduce the

Prosecution of Looked After Children

Recommendation:

Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the Pan Sussex Protocol and to support the implementation in East Sussex.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The implementation of the Protocol will be carried out within existing resources. There will therefore be no financial implication for the implementation of the Protocol. There are potential cost savings as, if we can avoid Looked After Children entering the Criminal Justice System, this could reduce the potential for placement breakdowns and the resulting need for more costly alternative placements.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 The following are attached as appendices:
 - Report on reducing the prosecution of LAC (Appendix 1)
 - The Joint Protocol to Reduce the Prosecution of Looked After Children (Appendix 2)
 - The East Sussex Action Plan for the implementation of the Protocol (Appendix 3)

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 The Sussex Criminal Justice Board has developed and agreed a number of recommendations and the Joint Protocol aimed at the over-representation in youth custody, on probation and in adult custody of those who are, or had been, looked after children. East Sussex does not have as significant a level of over representation as experienced in West Sussex. However East Sussex has signed up to the Protocols and has developed an Action Plan for the delivery, as this approach will enable better outcomes for this vulnerable group.

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Director of Children's Services

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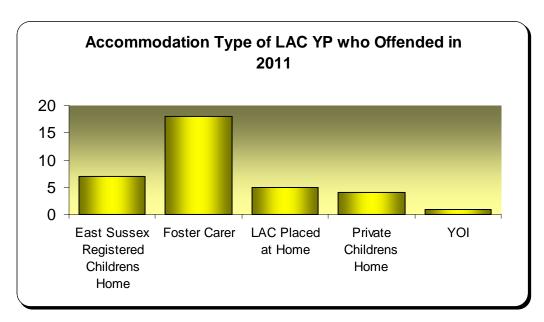
Local Members: All

Background Documents: None

Report on Reducing the Prosecution of Looked After Children

1 Background and Context

- 1.1 In 2011 the Sussex Criminal Justice Board looked at the issue of the significant over-representation Looked After or previously Looked After Children in youth custody, on probation and in adult custody. This was instigated by West Sussex, who has a far greater issue due to the high level of private children's homes in the county. A specialist Task and Finish Group was set up to develop solutions to the issue and make recommendations on the implementation to the Board. This resulted in the production of the Pan Sussex Protocols (Appendix 2), which East Sussex signed up to.
- 1.2 The Protocols offer a partnership approach including contributions from the Youth Offending Team (YOT), Children's Services, the Crown Prosecution Service, Sussex Police, the Courts, as well as foster carers and private children's homes. The standards and guidance in the protocols act as a framework for ensuring best practice for dealing with Looked after Children across Sussex.
- 1.3 In the calendar year 2011, 35 Looked After Children were convicted of offences. The majority of these were living with foster carers (18 young people), followed by those living in East Sussex Registered Children's Homes (7 young people). This data should however be treated with an element of caution as the numbers are very small and there has historically been difficulties collating this data.



2 Implementation of the Protocol

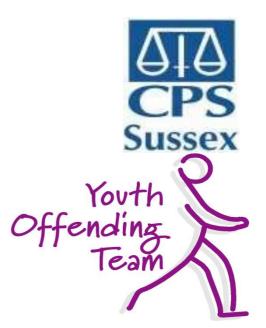
- 2.1 An action plan (Appendix 3) has been agreed to implement the protocols in East Sussex. The action plan addresses the following aims:
 - To improve the needs analysis;
 - To improve communications amongst key partners;
 - To improve the skills and knowledge base relating to this agenda amongst key partners;
 - To reduce the numbers of Looked After Children entering the Criminal Justice System; and
 - To reduce reoffending in Looked After Children.
- 2.2 The delivery of the Action Plan will be overseen by the Chief Officer Group.

3 Recommendation

3.1 The recommendation of this report is for the Corporate Parenting to be aware of the protocol and support the implementation in East Sussex.







A Joint Protocol to Reduce the Prosecution of Looked After Children

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is based upon the good practice already in place across Sussex to meet the needs of Looked After Children within children's' homes and foster placements. This includes the contribution of staff from the Local Authority Youth Offending Teams, the Crown Prosecution Service, Police, HMCTS, the Magistracy, as well as foster carers and independent children's' homes. This Protocol has been designed to reinforce and extend such practice and to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.

It is anticipated that the standards and guidance contained within the Protocol will act as a framework for ensuring best practice in dealing with Looked After Children across Sussex. The Protocol aims to strike a balance between the rights and needs of the children and young people, the rights of staff and foster carers, and the decision to involve the Police and/or CPS.

The Protocol supports Department of Education National Minimum Standards for Children's' Homes, which state that "the homes approach to care minimises the need for Police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids criminalising children unnecessarily".

The Protocol aims to reduce the prosecution of Looked After Children, wherever possible, by encouraging the use of restorative justice (RJ) approaches. Restorative Justice is a process whereby the victim has an opportunity to be heard and to state the impact of the behaviour and the offender has the opportunity to take responsibility for his or her actions. Approaches can range from internal mediation within children's' homes, without involving the Police, between young people and staff, to community resolutions which do involve the Police.

A Community Resolution is defined as any action that is requested by the victim, which is agreed by the offender and is considered appropriate and proportionate by the officer (see Appendix G). Community resolution places the victim very much at the centre of the process, and allows the victim to propose the outcomes to put right the harm caused by the offender. If the victim does not wish the harm done to them to be repaired in this way, then community resolution is not an outcome which will be considered.

The Protocol underlines the importance of regular and effective liaison between children's' homes staff and managers, the social worker and managers, the Youth Offending Service, local Neighbourhood Policing Teams, and Youth Specialist Prosecutors.

Whilst all staff and foster carers working with Looked After Children have a duty to report known or suspected crimes to the Police, they will need to use their judgement about where the threshold lies, particularly if the information to hand is slight and the crime, or suspected crime, is of a minor nature.

The fact that staff or carers report an incident does not mean that the Police will follow a pre-determined course of action or in some cases any action at all, although there are circumstances where the Police must record and investigate incidents as a crime. Wherever possible, as defined in this Protocol, the action to be taken will be determined following discussions by all concerned, including the young person, about the most appropriate response.

2. DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO INVOLVE THE POLICE

It is recognised that caring for, and managing young people with difficult or challenging behaviour is an integral feature of residential care work. Children's home staff and foster carers will generally manage problematic situations except where they are so severe that immediate Police involvement is essential in order to avoid physical assault or damage.

2.1 Ongoing Liaison

Police involvement in children's homes could be through the Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Neighbourhood Schools' Officers and Missing Person Co-ordinators. (See Appendix A for details of how to contact your local NPT, NSO or MPC). It must be emphasised that a good working relationship is the most effective way to respond to young people with difficulties, and it is in this area that consideration should be given for joint agency training.

Regular liaison meetings between Neighbourhood Policing Teams and staff in children's homes would provide for discussion of not serious incidents within the home to identify the appropriate method of resolution, including:

- Internal action by children's home staff with no Police involvement
- Invitation to local Neighbourhood Policing Team to support internal action being taken by staff in children's homes by attending a meeting with the young person and staff at the home
- Formal Police investigation primarily by the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and any resulting action

This liaison meeting will also provide an opportunity to share more general views and co-operation and develop a better understanding of each Agency's responsibilities and practices.

It is not the intention of this Protocol to restrict the options available to staff in children's homes and Police but to emphasise the importance of flexibility in determining the most suitable option for dealing with children and young persons. Additional advice and support could be sought from the child's social worker.

2.2 Individual Incidents

The Protocol identifies three categories of Incident, and outlines how each category should be dealt with:

Internal, Not serious, Serious

A flow diagram is shown at Appendix B.

Internal Incidents

It is anticipated that relatively minor incidents will be addressed by using routine internal policies and procedures. Referral to the Youth Offending Service for the area should be considered.

Not Serious Incidents

An incident where no immediate Police response is required for example where assault or damage has occurred and there is no risk of reoccurrence/significant harm to people, or incidents of theft. The incidents should be reported to the Registered Manager who then has the responsibility of identifying the appropriate course of action. In addition staff within the home should inform the child/young person's Social Worker at the first opportunity.

It is important to avoid any unnecessary reporting of incidents to the Police. Should the Registered Manager decide and/or the victim wishes that formal Police involvement is necessary, where possible this should be through on going liaison with local Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

When a situation involving a child or young person is to be discussed at the regular meeting the child's Social Worker should be informed and they may wish to join the discussion.

If the discussion needs to be held sooner the Registered Manager should arrange for a member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team to visit the home as soon as possible. If no member of this Team is available the Manager should contact the Police Control Room to request a scheduled response visit by another Officer.

In certain circumstances preservation of evidence may be an issue and residential staff will need to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to retain articles relevant to any criminal allegation or Police investigation.

A referral to the Youth Offending Service for the area should be considered for those cases considered not serious or internal.

Serious Incidents

Incidents of violence requiring an immediate Police response where children/young persons or staff are:

- At risk of immediate serious physical harm
- > Where there is a risk of substantial damage to property, or
- Risk of significant disorder with the home or placement.

In such situations the senior member of staff on duty should contact the Police using the 999 system. Foster carers should also use the 999 system in these situations and contact the Emergency Duty Service for further support.

3. REQUIREMENT FOR POLICE INVOLVEMENT

Staff and carers need to consider the nature and seriousness of the incident before deciding whether to involve the Police immediately, at a later stage, or whether to involve them at all, but all matters should be entered in an incident log for residential children's homes, and in the incident log file for foster carers. It is crucial that communication between children's home staff, foster carers and the Police regarding an incident is clear and factual.

Factors to be Considered

The following factors should be considered when determining what action to take. The list is not exhaustive, and does not reflect any order of priority:

- Nature and seriousness of the allegation
- Severity of the injury sustained/nature of threat received by the victim
- Wishes and best interest of the victim
- Previous incidents of a similar nature by the same child or young person
- Previous relationship between victim and offender
- Previous behaviour or offending, bullying/peer pressure/duress
- Probability of a repeat incident
- > Potential impact on the child/young person following formal Police involvement
- Appropriateness of Police action/court proceedings
- Future best interests of all parties concerned
- Message sent to other young people/Confidence in being able to report crimes and confidence in knowing they may not result in court proceedings
- Availability of alternative causes of action, e.g. restorative approaches with the consent of the victim, referral to the Youth Offending Service
- Level/value of damage caused
- Requirement for formal investigation, e.g. insurance claim requires a crime reference report

The following situations are the most common ones in children's homes where Police involvement might be requested. (Please also refer to the Checklist at Appendix C.)

3.1 Violence Against Person, Criminal Damage, or Theft

Violence by a child or young person on another

These are incidents between residents within the home ranging from minor disagreements through to serious assaults where physical injury is caused. Such incidents can be complicated by having two vulnerable parties. Residential staff and foster carers will need to ensure that health and safety reporting procedures are followed, and will also need to follow their own internal policies for dealing with violence in the home.

Violence to staff or foster carers by a child or young person

Violence towards staff members or carers can vary from verbal threats to physical acts amounting to assault. Whilst each home and placement has the responsibility of care towards young people their welfare needs to be balanced with the rights of staff and carers not to be subjected to violence in the course of their duties.

Such incidents are affected by factors similar to those listed above, and staff and carers should be encouraged to report any incidents that cannot be dealt with through alternative means. Where there is no immediate continuing threat of violence it is in the best interests of the staff member or carer to take time to discuss and consider possible options.

This can include a referral to the Youth Offending Service which will give consideration to the necessary intervention. This however, does not remove the individual's right to involve the Police. Following such incidents it is important that staff and carers utilise standard de-briefing processes.

Staff and carers should also ensure risk assessments are updated or completed in relation to the risk of violence or injury to themselves or colleagues. A professionals meeting could be a useful method by which to assess these risks and look at ways this risk could be reduced.

Criminal Damage within the Home or Placement, or to Staff or Carers' Cars or Property

The majority of criminal incidents involving Police relate to damage to the children's home or placement. It is important to see these in the context of the needs of the child and whether involving the Police is an effective and proportionate response.

Theft within the Home or Placement

Most offences of theft within the home or placement are likely to be of low value, but the possible start of criminal behaviour, although it should be emphasised that value is a subjective issue relative to the victim.

3.2 Hate Incidents and Crime (Racist, Religion, Homophobic, Gender, Disability)

The following sections set out the definition of Hate Incidents and Crime to help inform the decision making process in determining the categories of response for children's homes staff and carers.

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- All possible steps should be taken by the Police at local level, in consultation with other agencies to encourage the reporting of hate incidents and crimes.
- ➤ It should be made clear that all behaviour policies held within children's homes should cover the areas as indicated as hate crime and it be made clear how staff, carers and residents should deal with it. Homes and placements should themselves handle low level daily occurrences and their management of this aspect of discipline should be subject to inspection.
- A multi-agency approach to such incidents can ensure that help is provided to victims of these incidents providing them with a range of options for reporting and ensuring that the young person is sufficiently supported.

In the recording of hate crime the minimum data content required should be as follows:

- Reported to: (The person receiving the report such as Registered Manager, Unit staff, Police Officer)
- > At: (Location reported at): (i.e. Home, Police Station, etc)
- Referred by: (the Agency or other person referring the victim to the Police if the incident is being referred)
- > Time and date of report and nature of incident.

Definitions

A hate incident is defined as any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

A hate crime is defined as any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

It is vitally important to note that all hate crimes are hate incidents. However some hate incidents may not constitute a criminal offence and therefore will not be recorded as a hate crime. For example, making inappropriate reference to the colour of someone's skin, in a non-confrontational social setting, may well be perceived as a racist incident. However there may be insufficient evidence that it would constitute a racist crime. It is important to understand this distinction.

The Police are responsible for data collection in relation to hate incidents and hate crimes. It is important that this data is comprehensive and sufficiently robust to establish trends and inform an intelligence driven response.

- Racist Incident Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.
- ➤ Homophobic Incident Any incident which is perceived to be homophobic by the victim or any other person.
- > Transphobic Incident Any incident which is perceived to be transphobic by the victim or any other person.
- Faith Related Incident Any incident which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards or hatred of the faith of the victim or so perceived by the victim or any other person.
- Sectarian Incident Any incident which is perceived to be sectarian by the victim or any other person.
- ➤ Disablist Incident (or sometimes referred to as a disability incident) Any incident which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards or hatred of the victim because of their disability or so perceived by the victim or any other person.
- Ageist Incident Any incident which is perceived to be ageist by the victim or any other person

3.3 Disorder in or around the Home or Placement

The area of disorder is subjective and requires judgement by staff to avoid unnecessary Police involvement for minor infringements of discipline. The main factors that should be considered are:

- Nature and seriousness of the disorder
- > Risk or threat of violence
- > The wishes of and impact on the immediate community
- > The availability of alternative courses of action

3.4 Trespass within and around Home or Placement

All incidents of trespass by persons unknown should be reported to the Police as visits/trespass by outside associates of residents can be dealt with effectively under the Harassment Act, which will protect young people and staff/carers.

3.5 Substance Misuse

3.5.1 Reducing the risk of drug taking

The misuse of controlled drugs within a children's home or placement is a serious issue and it is essential that the response is prompt and effective. In response to incidents staff and carers will be guided by the Government's Tackling Drugs Strategy, which has four main aims:

- Help young people to resist drugs use in order to achieve their full potential in society.
- Reduce the acceptability and availability of alcohol and other drugs to young people.
- Minimise the health risks and other damage associated with substance use by young people.
- Increase the safety of communities from drug related crime.

Residential Staff or carers will need to balance these principles with their duty of care for the young people in the home or placement and their role in managing young people's behaviour as part of their care responsibilities as well as their responsibilities to the wider community.

3.5.2 The discovery of drugs within the placement setting

Children's home staff must read this Protocol in conjunction with the National Minimum Standards, with particular attention being paid to the section on drugs.

Residential staff and carers must inform the Police immediately if it is established that a young person is using illegal substances or illegal substances are found on the premises. It is important that all action taken is recorded.

All materials must be removed from the young person. Drugs and drug related material must be stored securely before handing to the Police. These must **NOT** be disposed of by staff or carers.

These can be handed over for disposal without identifying the name of the young person and no further Police action will be undertaken. The signature of the Police officer removing the material must be obtained. However, repeated incidents of removal of illegal substances from the same young person may require positive Police action thus protecting the young person and other young people, as well as staff/carers.

In the removal and storage of illegal substances appropriate storage containers must be used.

A record of the removal must be kept by staff or carers, which includes:

- The name of the person removing the material
- Description of the material
- > The circumstances of the removal
- > The time and date of the removal
- > The time and date the material was placed in a secure storage
- > The signature of the person putting the article into storage, countersigned by a second member of staff
- > The time and date of notification to the Police and the message number notified by the Police control room
- ➤ The time and date the material was removed by the Police

To ensure that controlled substances are not stored in the children's home or placement any longer than necessary it is important that every effort is made to ensure that the Police attend at the earliest possible time. Staff and carers must first contact the Sussex Police Contact Centre to arrange for the Police to attend the home placement.

This route helps for the recording of the request on the Police Command and Control System generating a message number for the benefit of the residential staff or carers.

The officer attending is then responsible for recovering the suspected controlled substances into Police possession and, if appropriate, conducting any subsequent investigation in line with existing Police policy.

Alcohol and canisters can be disposed of by staff or carers. It is important that the disposal is witnessed and a record kept which includes:

- Name of the person removing the material
- > Description of the material
- > The circumstances of the removal
- > The time and date of the removal
- The time and date and means of disposal

4 CHILDREN MISSING OR ABSENT FROM CARE

The potential risk to any children whose whereabouts are unknown requires an immediate assessment. Only when the risk assessment identifies the child as 'missing' or 'absent' should notification be made to the Police.

A joint Protocol has been agreed between Sussex Police and the Children Services in Brighton & Hove, East and West Sussex in relation to the reporting of incidents of 'absent' and 'missing'. A flowchart outlining the process is contained at Appendix D.

4.1 Determine whether the child is 'absent' or 'missing'

It is important that carers make an initial assessment of whether the child is 'missing' or 'absent'.

Missing is "anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another".

The child should be considered missing where their location or reason for absence is unknown and/or there is cause for concern for the child because of their vulnerability or there is potential danger to the child or to the public.

The decision to report a child as missing should not be taken in isolation, unless the circumstances dictate it is not feasible to do so (e.g. child has run off from carers on an escorted trip). Staff should consult with the senior staff member on duty; foster carers should liaise with the child's social worker or Emergency Duty Service staff. Each case must be decided on merit and a formal missing person report to the Police may be actioned earlier in some circumstances than others.

If, however, the child is not where they are expected to be but does not meet the criteria for 'missing', they may be considered as 'absent'. Absent is defined as "A person not at the place where they are expected or required to be". This could, for example, be where a child has stormed out after an argument or has failed to return at the agreed time.

In determining the type of absence, reference should be made to the child's individual risk assessment and care plan, together with knowledge of the child and patterns of behaviour. The fact that the child may have gone missing on a number of previous occasions does not reduce the risk and a decision must be reached on a case by case basis.

4.2 Report to the Police

All incidents, whether 'absent' or 'missing', should be reported to the Police, but the responsibility for managing an absence lies with the staff of the care home or foster carer. There is an expectation that staff or foster carers will make reasonable enquiries to locate the absent child and encourage them to return to where they should be.

The rationale for reporting the child as absent, rather than missing, must be recorded in writing and the incident reviewed regularly in light of any enquiries made or information received. The Police must be informed of any developments.

It will also be the responsibility of care staff or foster parents to inform any other interested party with caring responsibilities for the child (eg parent, social worker, responsible social authority if different) of any absence or incidence of missing.

If the child has gone missing from foster care and a risk assessment has not been completed in advance, the foster carer must contact the child's social worker/duty social worker or emergency duty team (if out of hours), who will assist with completion of the risk assessment and advise on reporting the child to Police.

4.3 Return to children's home or foster placement

Through regular liaison between the care homes and local Neighbourhood Policing Teams consideration should be given to the use of a restorative justice/community resolution approach to the reintegration of the young person into the children's home or foster placement on their return.

5 INFORMATION SHARING

The setting out of arrangements for information sharing and disclosure in line with the provisions of Date Protection Act and Crime and Disorder Act Section 115 (see guidance at Appendix E).

Also refer to the SCJB Multi-Agency Information Sharing Guidance.

6 RECORDING OF INCIDENTS

6.1 Recording of Incidents

By residential staff

It is necessary for incidents within children's homes to be accurately recorded so as to provide informed histories on the children and young persons looked after, assisting with assessments and liaison meetings.

All incidents must be recorded in the personal file of each young person and entered in the Home's Day Book/ Incident Log. Risk assessments should be reviewed. This provision also applies to incidents discussed through regular liaison with local Neighbourhood Policing Teams and where relevant Missing Person Co-ordinators.

By foster carers

It is necessary for incidents within foster care placements to be accurately recorded so as to provide informed histories on the children and young persons looked after, assisting with assessments and liaison meetings.

All incidents must be recorded in the ring binders of each young person and reported to the family placement social worker and the child's social worker. Risk assessments should be reviewed.

6.2 Whether to Record (Police)

In April 2002, the police service in England (and Wales) adopted the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). It governs the way in which the police record crime. Under this standard, the police will record an incident as a crime (notifiable offence) against an identified victim if, on the balance of probability

[a.] the circumstances as reported amount to a crime defined by law (the police will determine this, based on their knowledge of the law and counting rules);

AND

[b.] there is no credible evidence to the contrary.

In most cases, the belief by the victim (or person reasonably assumed to be acting on behalf of the victim) that a crime has occurred is sufficient to justify recording although this will not be the case in all circumstances.

In the normal course of events the parent / guardian / representative can reasonably be assumed to be acting on behalf of the victim. The criteria is not age specific and each incident has to be judged on its own merits.

3rd Party Report

Where there are grounds to suspect that a victim related crime may have taken place, but no victim (or person reasonably assumed to be acting on behalf of the victim) can

immediately be found or identified, the matter should be recorded as a third party report, until such time as the victim is located or comes forward.

All incidents reported to the Police, whether from victims, witnesses or third parties and whether crime related or not, will result in the registration of and incident report by the Police.

Where an incident is reported to the Police directly via the Sussex Police Contact Centre, Public Service Desk or attending officer then the Force Policy for recording of incidents and crimes should be adhered to.

6.3 When to Record (Police)

A crime should be recorded as soon as the decision to record has been made (or as soon as possible afterwards).

To ensure compliance with the counting rules, offences which come to the notice of the Police through involvement in children's homes, must be recorded, unless the criteria as stated above applies.

It is important to remember that each children's home has the responsibility of care towards the resident young persons with their welfare interests being paramount. Department for Education National Minimum Standards for Children's' Homes dictate that each home must have a clear written policy on managing behaviour, which includes supporting positive behaviour, de-escalation of conflicts, discipline, control and restraint that all staff understand and apply at all times. Consequences of unacceptable behaviour should be clear to staff and children, and must be appropriate to the age, understanding and individual needs of the child. Therefore, the requirement to record offences should be considered in conjunction with the desire to avoid unnecessary criminalisation of young people who are looked after by the Local Authority.

6.4 Recording of serious incidents by the Police

Given the immediate response aspect of this category, offences which come to the notice of attending officers would be of such a nature as to require recording unless there were exceptional extenuating circumstances.

6.5 Recording of Not Serious Incidents by the Police

Not serious incidents reported to the Registered Manager which warrants Police investigation will be recorded as crimes provided they meet the Home Office recording criteria.

Incidents that are considered suitable for internal resolution by children's home staff or other agency do not need to be reported to the Police, however, the staff should record full details and decisions within the children's home register.

7 PROSECUTION OF INCIDENTS BY CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE

7.1 Offending Behaviour in Children's Homes.

The decision to prosecute Looked After Children for low level offences committed within a children's home is a major decision and should be taken by a youth specialist who has attended the CPS Youth Specialist Course and is at least a Senior Crown Prosecutor.

The guidance should be considered in conjunction with the code for Crown Prosecutors, CPS Policies Statements and legal guidance.

The Police are more likely to be called to a children's home than a domestic setting to deal with an incident of offending behaviour by an adolescent. The Crown Prosecution Service should bear this in mind when dealing with incidents that take place in a children's home.

It is important that all people feel safe in the place that they live, whether that is in a family home or a children's home, and have confidence in the criminal justice system to intervene and protect them where it is necessary.

A criminal justice disposal, whether a prosecution, reprimand, or warning, should not be regarded as an automatic response to offending behaviour by a Looked After Child, irrespective of their criminal history. This applies equally to a persistent offender and adolescents of good character. A criminal justice disposal will only be appropriate where it is clearly required by the public interest.

Informal disposals such as a referral to the Youth Crime Prevention Panel, restorative justice conferencing, reparation, acceptable behaviour contracts and disciplinary measures by the home may be sufficient to satisfy the public interest and to reduce the risk of future offending.

7.2 Behaviour Management Policies

Each home must have a written Behaviour Management Policy that sets out the measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the children's home and the means whereby appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the home. A copy of this policy and a statement from the home setting out how the policy has been applied to the particular incident should accompany any request for advice on charging.

7.3 The Decision to Prosecute

Youth Specialists should consider all the circumstances surrounding the offence and the circumstances of the child/young person before reaching a decision, and apply the Code for Crown Prosecutors and all relevant CPS Youth Policies

Factors that should be considered include:

- Disciplinary Policy of the home
- An explanation from the home regarding their decision to involve the Police
- Information from the home about the recent behaviour of the child or young person including similar behaviour, any incidents in the child or young person's life which could have affected their behaviour, any history between the

- child/young person and the victim, any apology or reparation, history of the incident and any action taken under the disciplinary policy of the home.
- ➤ Views of the victim, including their willingness to attend court to give evidence and/or participate in a restorative justice or other diversionary programme.
- ➤ Views of the key worker, social worker, counsellor, CAMHS worker on the effect of a criminal justice intervention on the child or young person, particularly where the child or young person suffers from an illness or disorder.
- ➤ Any explanation of information about the offence from the child or young person.
- Provided the child or young person wishes it to be considered, information about the Local Authority's assessment of his/her needs and how the placement provided by the home is intended to address them

7.4 Aggravating and Mitigating Factors

Aggravating and mitigating features should be considered when deciding on the appropriate outcome.

Aggravating factors include:

- The offence is violent or induces a genuine fear of violence in the victim
- > The offence is sexual
- ➤ The offence is motivated by hostility based on gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion or ethnicity of the victim
- > The victim is vulnerable
- > The damage or harm caused is deliberate and cannot be described as minor
- > The offence forms part of a series of offences
- > Informal measures have been ineffective in preventing offending behaviour

Mitigating factors include:

- The damage or harm caused is at the lower end of the scale and has been put right
- Appropriate action has already been taken under the disciplinary procedure or other informal disposal
- Genuine remorse and apology to victim
- The behaviour is a symptom of a disorder or illness that cannot be controlled by medication or diet
- Isolated incident, or out of character
- ➤ The child or young person is under extreme stress or appears to have been provoked and has over-reacted

8 MONITORING

To evaluate compliance with this Protocol, regular meetings should be held between the Police, Children's Homes and Foster Care Providers, Youth Offending Services, and CPS. This will be done via a Looked After Children multi-agency steering group on behalf of the Sussex Criminal Justice Board.

The group will also ensure that this document is reviewed on an annual basis.

Name & Position	- Sussex Police
Signature	Dated
Name & Position	- CPS
Signature	Dated
Name & Position	. HMCTS
Signature	Dated
Name & Position	- ESCC
Signature	Dated
Name & Position	- WSCC
Signature	Dated
Name & Position	- BHCC
Signature	Dated
Name & Position	- CHILDREN'S HOMES
Signature	Dated
Name & Position	FOSTER CARERS
Signature	Dated

Appendix A

CONTACTS

Each area in Sussex has a dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) which includes Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Schools Officers.

There are a number of ways that you can find the contact details of your local NPT. You can:

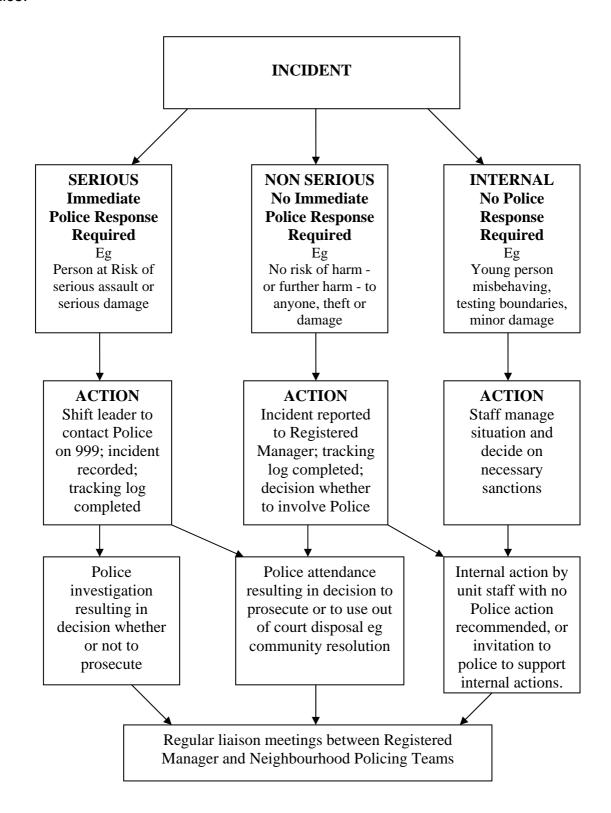
- Call the Sussex Police non-emergency number 101
- Visit your local Police station
- ➤ Visit the Sussex Police website at www.sussex.police.uk. Click on Your Neighbourhood, Your District, select your district and then your ward.

On the website you will also find how to sign up to Community Messaging so that you receive emails about policing in your area.

Appendix B

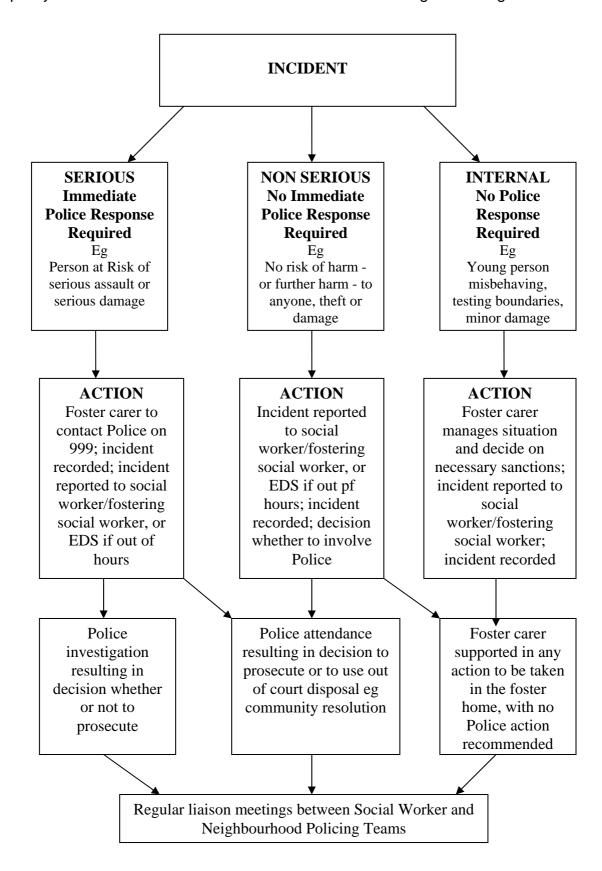
CHILDREN'S HOMES DECISION TO INVOLVE POLICE

This policy must be followed when any member of staff is considering contacting the Police.



FOSTER CARERS DECISION TO INVOLVE POLICE

This policy must be followed when a Foster Carer is considering contacting the Police.



Appendix C

CHECKLIST TO BE USED WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO INVOLVE THE POLICE

Name of young person(s)/staff involved in incident						
Offender	ffender Victim					
Date Incident Occurred	_ Location of	Incident				
Nature of Incident (please circle)						
Violence by a child or young pers	Once	Ongoing				
Violence to staff or foster carers	Once	Ongoing				
Criminal Damage within the Hom	ent	Once	Ongoing			
Criminal Damage to Staff or Care	Once	Ongoing				
Theft within the Home or Placeme	Once	Ongoing				
Hate Crime (Racist, Religion, Hor	Once	Ongoing				
Disorder in or around the Home or Placement				Ongoing		
Trespass within and around Home or Placement			Once	Ongoing		
Substance Misuse Other (please describe)				Ongoing		
Who has been affected? (please lis	t):					
Any other comments:						
Before I contact the Police, I cont	firm that I hav	ve already compl	eted th	ne following:		
Internal Enquiry	Yes	No				
Internal Discussion	Yes	No				
Internal Restorative Conference Yes No						
Referral to YOT	Yes	No				
Referral to Social Worker	Yes	No				
Sanction	Type:					
Referred to Police By				_ (print name)		

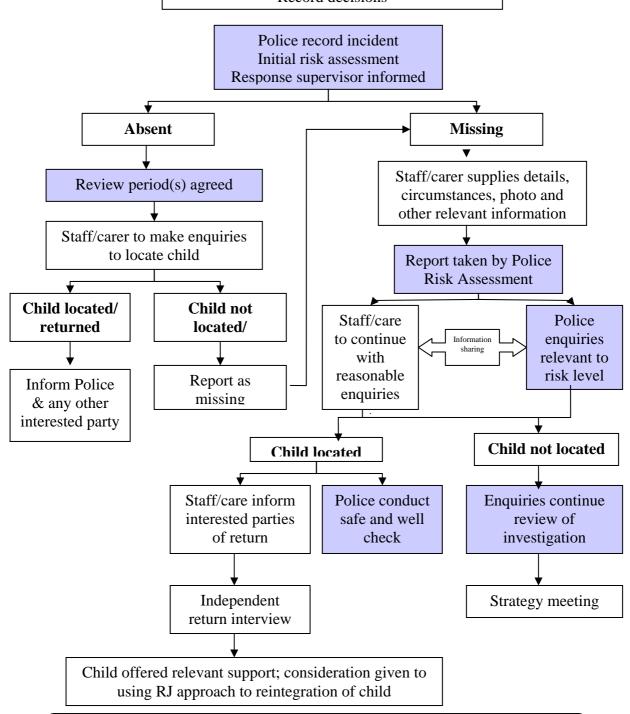
Appendix D

MISSING FROM CARE PROCESS FLOWCHART

Care plan and individual risk assessment created for looked after child

Residential staff/foster carer aware that child is 'missing from care'

Decide whether child is 'absent' or 'missing'
Report to Police
Record decisions



Frequent absences and incidents giving cause for concern will be subject of multi-agency review to identify relevant support and preventative

Appendix E

GUIDANCE ON INFORMATION SHARING

The following guidance on information sharing between agencies under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was issued in November 1998 in a joint statement by the Home Office and Data Protection Registrar:

Before public or statutory bodies can disclose information, they must first establish whether they have power to do so and/or whether they have a responsibility to do so. Once the question of power is resolved, they must carry out the disclosure in a lawful manner.

THE POWER TO DISCLOSE

The Police have an important and general power at common law to disclose information for the prevention and detection of crime. Indeed, both the public and the Government expect them to use their powers and their knowledge to prevent crime and to reduce crime and disorder. There are no restrictions on the disclosure of information, which does not identify individuals.

THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The Act introduces a number of measures to control crime and disorder, all of which depend on close co-operation, including the proper exchange of information:

- > section 17: duty to prevent crime and disorder;
- sections 6&7: formulating and implementing strategy;
- > section 39: youth offending teams;
- section 1: anti-social behaviour orders:
- > section 2: sex offender orders;
- > section 15; local child curfew schemes;
- > section 16: contravention of child curfew notices.

Public bodies collect information, which will be central to the Act's partnership approach; but they may not previously have had power to disclose this information to the Police and others. Section 115 provides that any person can lawfully disclose information 'for the purposes of the Act' to the Police, local authorities, probation service or health authority (or persons acting on their behalf), even if they do not otherwise have this power.

Section 115 ensures all agencies have a power to disclose: it does not impose a requirement on them to exchange information, and so control over disclosure remains with the agency which holds the data. Information exchange, whether carried out under the power in section 115 or under any other common law or statutory power, is therefore controlled by the normal data protection regime and common law. The public rightly expects that personal information known to public bodies will be properly protected. However, the public also expects the proper sharing of information, as this can be an important weapon against crime. Agencies should, therefore, seek to share information where this would be in the public interest.

LAWFUL EXERCISE OF THE POWER TO DISCLOSE

Any disclosure of personal data must have regard to both common and statute law, for example defamation, the common law duty of confidence, and the data protection principles -unless and to the extent that any Data Protection Act exemptions apply. The principles require that such information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; is only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; is accurate, relevant, and not held longer than necessary; and is kept securely.

The best way of ensuring that disclosure is properly handled is to operate within information sharing Protocols carefully formulated by the agencies involved. Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 can be used to reinforce the many and existing and successful Protocols for the sharing of information for crime and disorder purposes between, for example, the Police and probation service. The Home Office and the Office of the Data Protection Registrar have issued guidance on the preparation and use of Protocols.

Further guidance may be obtained from the Criminal Policy Strategy Unit at the Home Office or the Compliance Manager at the Office of the Data Protection Registrar

Appendix F

EXPLANATION OF DISPOSAL OPTIONS

Community Resolution

Community Resolution is not a criminal conviction but it may be disclosed under the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) enhanced disclosure process subject to the nature of employment being sought.

Reprimands and Final Warnings

A Reprimand or Final Warning is not a criminal conviction, but a record will be created recording the fact an individual has received such a sanction and this will be held on the Police National Computer.

The juvenile must admit the offence in order for a reprimand or warning to be given. If the juvenile has not been reprimanded or warned previously then a reprimand shall be given (unless the offence is so serious as to require a final warning). If the person has been reprimanded previously then a final warning shall be given. If the juvenile was warned two years or more previously and the offence is not so serious as to require a charge then a further warning may be given on one more occasion.

Any further occurrences will normally result in the juvenile being charged leading to a court appearance in the Youth Court.

Applications for certain jobs, either paid or unpaid, require a Criminal Records Bureau check (CRB check) to be carried out. CRB checks are needed for nearly all jobs where you work with children or vulnerable adults, as well as for other sensitive jobs involving a high level of trust. Reprimands and Final Warnings remain on a person's record until their 100th birthday, and will be disclosed to any employer asking for a CRB check.

If the offence admitted is a sexual offence, this may mean that the person will have their name added to the Violent and Sex Offender Register and the person will have to agree to certain conditions around registration.

Appendix G

COMMUNITY RESOLUTIONS - POLICE GUIDANCE

Community Resolutions provide an opportunity for officers to deal with offences at a low or community level without the recourse to arrest and formal sanction. It provides officers with the opportunity to make professional and discretionary judgements about whether or not the formal criminal justice system should be invoked. Putting the wishes and expectations of the victim first, officers have the discretion to offer the victim the opportunity for the crime to be dealt with through a resolution process. A Community Resolution is defined as any action that is requested by the victim, which is agreed by the offender and is considered appropriate and proportionate by the officer.

The following 'Decision Making Model' is for use for deciding whether either a Level 1 or Level 2 Community Resolution is appropriate.

NO AUTHORITY REQUIRED

RESOLUTION CAN BE APPLIED IF:

Offences can include:

- Burglary OTD
- Vehicle interference
- Criminal damage
- o Theft
- Common assault
- S4 Public Order
- S5 Public Order

SERGEANTS AUTHORITY REQUIRED

CAREFUL
CONSIDERATION
AND
JUSTIFICATION
IS REQUIRED
BEFORE
DISCRETION
CAN BE
APPLIED:

- Domestic Abuse (non-partner/ex partner)
- Repeat victim, same offender
- Neighbourhood priorities
- Hate crime (SIU)
- High community impact
- History of offender
- 2 + Harassment

Resolution can be used even if offender has previous reprimand, final warning, caution, convictions, FPND - but consider: suspect motivation, impact on victim, family impact, current offending profile. For DA – the DASH risk assessment must be graded as 'Standard', for a CR to apply.

INSPECTORS AUTHORITY REQUIRED

These offences do not usually apply, however in exceptional circumstances can be authorised

- Domestic Abuse
 - (partner/ex-partner) DASH RA = Standard
- Serious crime
- Child protection
- Vulnerable adult offences
- PPO, DYO, ASBO
- Sex offences
- Drugs offences
- Honour Based Crime

Low Risk Offences

Officers use their professional judgement and six considerations –

- 1. Is the offence solvable?
- 2. Does offender admit the offence and are they remorseful & willing to take part in the process?
- 3. What are the views of the victim?
- 4. What is the profile of the offender?
- 5. What is the community impact?
- 6. Can you deal with it as a Level 1 Community Resolution?

Medium Risk Offences

Officers use their professional judgement and six considerations –

- 1. Is the offence solvable?
- 2. Does offender admit the offence and are they remorseful & willing to take part in the process?
- 3. What are the views of the victim?
- 4. What is the profile of the offender?
- 5. What is the community impact?
- 6. Can you deal with it as a Level 1 Community Resolution?

For these offences officers will refer the decision to a Sergeant who will use the principles of the ACPO Gravity factors (Plus and Minus Factors) to assist them in using their professional judgment in their decision making rationale.

High Risk Offences

Officers use their professional judgement and six considerations –

- 1. Is the offence solvable?
- 2. Does offender admit the offence and are they remorseful & willing to take part in the process?
- 3. What are the views of the victim?
- 4. What is the profile of the offender?
- 5. What is the community impact?
- 6. Can you deal with it as a Level 1 Community Resolution?

Additionally, an Inspectors authority is required.

Protocol to Reduce the Prosecution of Looked After Children and Young People

Action Plan for the implementation in East Sussex

Aim	Action	Lead	Timescales	Progress
1. To improve needs analysis				
(i) Analyse information to ensure accurate picture of local need	 To complete an analysis of Looked After Children (LAC) that have offended or received Youth Offending Team (YOT) involvement from Jan 2011 to Dec 2011. This will be used to identify key issues that have contributed to offending behaviour and will inform future actions Action Plan to be adjusted to target the present need 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT / David Burbridge, Research & Information Management Officer YOT	February 2012	
(ii) Improve ongoing data collection to ensure performance can be monitored accurately	 Agree how LAC is recorded on Youth Offending Information System (YOIS) to enable more accurate future analysis 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT/ David Burbridge, Research & Information Management Officer YOT	January 2012	
(iii) Monitor performance on LAC entering the criminal justice system and LAC reoffending on a quarterly basis	 Quarterly performance data to be brought to the attention of relevant senior managers through the Chief Officers' Group (COG) 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	Quarterly	
(iv) Information of LAC placed out of County to be shared with YOT	Ensure that the East Sussex (ES) YOT is informed when an ESCC LAC who is placed out of county offends, or is involved with the police.	Peter Richards, Operational Manager, LAC. Mick McGlynn, Operational Manager, Youth Support Team	Immediate and ongoing	

Aim	Action	Lead	Timescales	Progress
2. To improve communications ar	nongst key partners		•	
(i) To ensure all staff in Residential Group Homes in ESCC are aware of the protocols and how to implement	 Protocols circulated to all Registered Homes Managers 	Teresa Lavelle-Hill Janet Fairless, Registered Children Homes Manager	November 2011	Completed Completed
them	 Tania Riedel (YOT Manager) to attend the Registered Homes Managers Meeting to discuss implementation 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	November 2011	·
	 Chief Inspector Ian Pollard and Elize Shult (Community Resolution (CR) lead) to attend the Registered Home Managers' meeting (RHM) to present the protocols from a Police perspective 	Chief Inspector Ian Pollard/ Elize Shult, CR lead	February 2012	Completed
	 TR to continue to liaise with Janet Fairless, Registered Children's Home Manager to ensure processes in place to implement the procedures 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT / Janet Fairless, Registered Children's Home Manager	Ongoing	
(ii) To ensure all private children homes are aware of and able to follow the protocols	 To send out the protocol with a covering letter to all the private Children's homes where ESCC LAC are placed and to ensure that each home adopts the protocol in relation to ESCC LAC 	Steve Hunt, Operational Manager, Fostering Annele Nel, Practice Manager, Fostering	Feb 2012	
(ii) To ensure all police officers are aware of the protocol	 Arrange for the protocol to be communicated to all officers 	Chief Inspector Ian Pollard	December 2011	
(iii) To improve ongoing partnership communications	 Arrange for Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for the Registered Homes in the YOT, Police and Targeted Youth Support (TYS) 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT Chief Inspector Ian Pollard Mark Haffenden, Practice Manager YOT / TYS	January 2012	

Aim	Action	Lead	Timescales	Progress
(iv) To ensure that East Sussex Youth Bench Magistrates are aware of the Protocol	 Copy of the protocol to be sent to the members of the Youth Bench via the Chair of the Youth Bench. 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	February 2012	
	 Protocol to be discussed with the Youth Bench at the next Youth Bench meeting. 		April 2012	
(v) To ensure foster carers in ESCC are aware of the protocols	 To send out the protocol with a covering letter to all adolescent foster carers YOT to attend 3 or 4 foster carer support groups, as the needs analysis dictates, in order to discuss the implementation of the protocol for YP placed in foster care. 	Steve Hunt, Operational Manager Fostering Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	March 2012 July 2012	
3. To improve the skills and know	ledge base relating to this agenda amongst key partners	3	l	
(i) Ensure all residential staff in group homes have the relevant knowledge and skills to implement the protocol	 Training – Agree a programme of training sessions, including short sessions delivered in team meetings in residential group homes: Regular training on Restorative Justice (RJ) processes in for staff in the homes Training for staff in the risk factors which may lead to Young People (YP) becoming involved in offending Information on Community Resolution (CR) Guidance on YOT orders, tagging/curfews etc. Information on what additional support services can be accessed 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT; Janet Fairless, Registered Children's Home Manager	Plan in place by February 2012 September 2011	All staff have completed RJ training

Aim	Action	Lead	Timescales	Progress
(ii) Ensure fosters carers have the relevant knowledge and skills to implement the protocol	YOT to work with the Fostering Service to ensure that training is offered to foster carers on the principals of restorative justice, the risks associated with young people becoming involved with offending, and information on court orders	Steve Hunt, Operational Manager, Fostering Carol Young, Training Officer, Fostering Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT / Mark Haffenden, Practice Manager YOT / TYS	September 2012	Foster carers have in the past received training on RJ but this will need to be updated.
(iii) Ensure we are learning from good practice and current research	 TR to attend the Reducing Offending – Messages from Research for policy and practice Conference and disseminate key learning. Regular liaison with partners in West Sussex and Brighton through the quarterly YOT Managers meetings. Utilise the leaning and findings from HMI Probation Thematic inspection on YOT work with Looked After Children subject to supervision in the community – Report due in Autumn 2012 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Tania Riedel attended conference January 2012

Aim	Action	Lead	Timescales	Progress		
4. To reduce numbers of LAC entering the criminal justice system						
(i) To monitor the effectiveness of the police pilot in West Sussex Police Division on community resolution: • Police to ask all under 18s their care status on arrest • LAC to be referred to TYS as appropriate If this is found to be effective, ESCC to consider whether implementation is appropriate for ES LAC	ES Police Community Resolution Coordinator to Liaise with West Sussex Police Division and feedback to YOT and TYS	Elize Shult CR lead	September 2012			
(ii) All Social Workers, residential staff and YOT to identify the risks of offending for LAC and this to be addressed in all care plans	 To ensure all initial/core assessments, LAC reviews address the risks of offending and implement actions to reduce the risks. To develop a check list of key risk and resilience factors based on recent research findings and send to key staff and managers 	Peter Richards, Operational Manager, LAC Mick McGlynn, Operational Manager YST All Registered Homes Managers All Independent Reviewing Officers				

Aim	Action	Lead	Timescales	Progress
5. To reduce reoffending in LAC				
(i) To ensure LAC young people are supported to comply with the conditions of their court order	 YOT Compliance/Breach Policy to include a compliance meeting at the start of court orders for LAC. 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	February 2012	
	 YOT staff to inform the residential key workers when a LAC young person receives an order. YOT staff and residential staff to liaise on a fortnightly basis throughout the duration of the order. This will include information on the nature of the work in order that residential staff can reinforce learning and facilitate YP attending appointments, etc. YOT staff and residential staff to give consistent messages to the young person, for example, on appointments, etc. 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT/Janet Fairless, Registered Children's Home Manager	Ongoing	
	YOT staff to liaise on a minimum of 4 weekly basis with foster carers throughout the duration of the orders.	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	Ongoing	
(ii) To ensure that ESSC YOT retains case responsibility of ES LAC cases.	To ensure all YOT managers are aware of and work to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) case responsibility protocols.	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	March 2012	
	 To liaise with YOT managers in West Sussex and Brighton and Hove to ensure they are following the same protocols 	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT	March 2012	

Aim	Action	Lead	Timescales	Progress
(iii) To ensure LAC young people are supported through custody and resettlement	 To review the Protocol between the YOT and Children's Services (LAC / YST teams) to ensure it meets all of the requirements of local authority. 	Brian Hughes	May 2012	
	To ensure that the protocol is fully operational in the YOT and Children's Services and staff teams are aware and have the skills and knowledge to implement them.	Tania Riedel, Operational Manager YOT Mick McGlynn Operational Manager, YST Peter Richards. Operational Manager, LAC	May 2012	