



Practice Note 35

Locality Integration Officers

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Topic Areas: Partnership Working, Safety of Vulnerable Groups, Community Engagement

Project Background and Aims

Locality Integration Officers (LIOs) were introduced by Lothian and Borders Police in May 2005 to join up community safety with education services. Under the initiative six Police Officers are protected from 'routine' operational duties to complement the school curriculum of Personal and Social Development and also to support the Scottish Borders Integrated Children and Young People Strategy. LIOs are thus variously involved in the provision of early interventions, delivering outreach work in partnership and helping young people develop strategies to keep themselves safe. The officers are based in local police stations when not engaged in outreach work.

LIOs provide coverage for the whole of the Scottish Borders Council area as each officer is aligned to an Integrated Children's Service (ICS) team, which operate within six distinct administrative localities. The role of LIOs is to build on existing partnerships and help deliver sessions addressing active citizenship to all children and young people within their locality. LIO funding is provided by Lothian and Borders Police and the Children and Young Persons Planning Partnership, as it is recognised that a large part of LIO activities occur within schools. The LIOs have a hot-desk facility within the ICS team offices.

The work of the LIOs is underpinned by the Partnership Tactical and Coordinating Group. This group is made up of a number of partners from health, fire and rescue service and community wardens with the aim of improving community safety. The key areas this group focuses on are drugs and alcohol, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, vandalism and road safety. The group provides focus on these issues for

the wider community and looks for ways to ensure safety messages are delivered and acknowledged.

When issues arise within communities that impact on children and young people, inputs are provided through schools to address particular concerns and these can be targeted at specific age groups in localised areas. This allows problems to be identified in real time and early interventions instigated to prevent issues escalating within the community.

Outcomes

National	4: 'Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens', 8: 'We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk', 9: 'We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger', and 11: 'We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others'.
Local	'Reduce the numbers of children and young people involved in offending behaviour in line with Scottish Borders Plan Outcome 01_1', 'Increase referrals with the number of children and Young People at risk from substance misuse to specialist services linked to the Scottish Borders Children and Young People's Service Plan Outcome 03_3', and 'Increase the percentage number of Young People who did not re-offend after 6 months of being issued a restorative justice warning by Lothian and Borders Police in line with the Scottish Borders Children's and Young People Project Plan Outcome 01_1'.

Resources

Funding:	Children and Young Persons Planning Partnership and Lothian and Borders Police.
Partners:	Children and Young Persons Planning Partnership, Lothian Borders Police, Scottish Borders Council Education Services, Community Learning and Developed, Integrated Children's Services, face2face,

Monitoring and Evaluation

Quarterly monitoring reports draw on several data sources. LIOs submit a monthly return on the work they have undertaken, the Police Juvenile Liaison Officer collates statistics relating to youth offending and restorative justice warnings and a database for youth referrals is maintained by face2face, a third sector service provider for young people. An online survey has also been utilised to obtain feedback on the LIO service from partners. Further information on the LIOs can be obtained from Lothian and Borders Police or Scottish Borders Council.

Activities

A large focus for the work undertaken by the LIOs revolves around their ICS locality work. They have their own caseloads, attend Meetings Around the Child, Joint Agency Action Teams, School Liaison Group and Transition Joint Agency Action Teams and contribute significantly to the weekly business meetings. This work focuses on providing early and effective interventions wherever possible and working with other members of the ICS team to achieve this.

On a daily basis, the LIOs receive a copy of each police referral/child concern form submitted for children within their locality. This allows the officers to identify at the earliest opportunity where an intervention needs to be made. For example, notifying a school where a child has been witness to a domestic situation within the family home. Two of the LIOs are trained in child protection adding further awareness to their role and ability to deal with arising issues or disclosures.

Each LIO is notified when a young person has been found under the influence of alcohol or found in possession of alcohol. The officer quickly identifies if that young person is already receiving support, and if they are not, the officer will visit the family at home and endeavour to engage with them and refer on to face2face.

The preventative, early intervention approach forms a core part of the work carried out by the LIO. Box 1 below lays out in more depth the specific core functions of the LIOs.

All LIO school-based presentations and workshops fit within the Curriculum for Excellence programme. LIOs give inputs to every school year on various safety messages, covering topics ranging from internet safety and cyber bullying to hate crime. In particular, internet safety and cyber bullying are significant emerging problems. The LIOs also provide sessions to parents to advise them of the dangers of the various technologies available and highlight steps they can take to keep their children safe online.

LIO school inputs are supported by a Drugs Awareness Officer, who provides information to pupils on the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse. This is further complimented by inputs from face2face youth workers, who provide counselling and advice for youths with alcohol or drug problems.

LIO workshops are structured around a life-cycle theme, providing key safety messages to children and young people at transition points in their lives. For example, this includes all primary seven pupils receiving alcohol/drug advice including a practical exercise on how they can help a friend in an emergency situation. Crucial Crew, a multiagency youth initiative, covers a number of safety aspects with interactive workshops provided by a range of partners, reinforcing key safety messages for particular situations.

LIOs engage with a number of diversionary projects in an attempt to improve outcomes for identified children with particular needs/issues. These are carried out on a partnership basis in order to achieve the best results. Partners include ICS and Community Learning and Development.

Activities have ranged from involving youths in sport, developing specified programmes where intensive work is undertaken with individuals and organising an event where a range of activities were provided for free. For example, LIOs are involved in the delivery of Safe T Going 4th (for fourth year school leavers) and Safe T in the Park (for fifth year pupils). Both of these events provide a number of workshops where the youths receive safety messages in relation to sexual health, healthy eating, road safety, internet, mental health, drug/alcohol misuse, having their own property, first aid and so on.

Box 1: Core functions of LIOs

Attend pre-school, primary and secondary schools to deliver appropriate information to children, parents and staff,

Identify and liaise with ICS Members,

Ensure that the Police Officers work closely with relevant projects and provide appropriate support to these groups,

Work closely with ICS in developing projects for and involving children and young people,

Identify children and young people at risk of harm, neglect abuse and substance misuse, refer them to appropriate agencies and assist them in the process of engaging with other ICS linked agencies,

Work closely with schools and other agencies in the early identification of vulnerable children and young people by collectively ensuring the correct level of support and referrals are maintained,

Work within the Scottish Borders Integrated Assessment Framework where necessary,

Engage with children and young people out with the school environment, work with colleagues in Community Learning & Development to develop diversionary evenings highlighting to young people what groups and activities are available as a diversionary alternative, and

Ensure that all work carried out by the Locality Police Officers is focused on providing early and effective interventions, working alongside partners and agencies delivering a variety of services.

Another vital part of LIO work is the delivery of restorative warnings. The officers deliver these where young people have offended. This intense one to one engagement highlights the consequences of behaviour to young people and creates the opportunity to address issues and prevent further offending. LIOs assist schools with the readmission of youths who have been excluded and report children for offences where appropriate. Restorative conferencing is another tool utilised by LIOs to address grievances between pupils, preventing situations from escalating and teaching pupils how to deal constructively with conflict.

Impact

An online survey of the LIOs' work was carried out in 2011, completed by Education and ICS staff. Overall, the work of the LIOs received very positive, complimentary comments and the added value of the Locality Integration Officers has been recognised by all partners they work with.

An outcome for the LIO funding is to contribute to a reduction in youth offending through early intervention work. This has been achieved, as indicated by a 14 per cent reduction in youth offending reports over the last two years. Moreover, during 2010/2011, there was an overall 79 per cent success in the restorative justice warnings administered, compared to 49 per cent in 2009/2010. However the final quarter saw the success rate rise to 89 per cent. This may have been the result of training two LIOs in delivering this aspect. Those who re-offended did so within six months of their warning.

There was an overall success rate of 80 per cent in the restorative justice warnings administered during 2010/2011, compared to 50 per cent in 2009/2010. Those who re-offended did so within six months of their warning. This demonstrates the successful outcome of reducing the number of youths who continue with offending behaviour.

Another outcome for the LIOs is to increase referrals of children and young people at risk from substance misuse to specialist services. This is measured with the number of referrals made to face2face. Between April 2009 and March 2010 there were a total of 74 referrals, rising to 121 referrals between April 2010 and March 2011.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

Each LIO undergoes a yearly competency appraisal, where the work undertaken by them is measured against core skill requirements. This ensures a proficient level of service and, if issues are identified, an opportunity to take action to remedy this. Moreover, the knowledge and skills of new LIOs are assessed to identify any required training needs, for example domestic abuse or restorative justice.

The introduction of the Integrated Assessment Framework has seen the workload of the LIOs increase, as they are frequently required to provide chronologies in relation to a child whose case is being reported to the Children's Reporter.

Feedback from the online survey completed by ICS and education staff has been used to identify good practice and enhance the delivery of LIO activities. For example, the responses provided by primary heads have shaped the subsequent content and delivery of workshops to primary school pupils. The use of GLOW, the education services intranet, will be explored as a communication tool to help address this.

NOT ALONE is a new peer education programme being run by the local LIO in partnership with LGBT Youth Scotland to prevent homophobic bullying within Peebles High School. The programme aims to increase awareness of the negative impacts of homophobic and cyber bullying amongst pupils and parents, foster respect amongst pupils and challenge homophobic stereotyping.

Summary

Locality Integration Officers are utilised by Lothian and Borders Police to deliver key community safety messages to young people. Primary and secondary pupils are engaged through programmes tailored to fit the Curriculum for Excellence and a range of diversionary activities delivered with key partners. LIOs operate within a prevention, intervention and education framework and, as such, they also deliver restorative warnings.

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