



Grant Thornton

## Youth Justice Board for England & Wales

Management review of pilot

Knife Possession Prevention Programmes (KPPP)

Appendix - Nottingham

June 2009

# Nottingham

## Introduction

This chapter provides an insight into the Nottingham City Youth Offending Team (YOT) approach to delivering the pilot Knife Possession Prevention Programmes (KPPP). Nottingham City YOT have developed a programme that is delivered in partnership with Nottinghamshire police, and the Tangere Arts Company.

The scheme is linked to the work of the attendance centre and takes place at this location. The programme has been built on the best practice from previous initiatives run by the YOT, which had focussed on the wider use of weapons and taken the views and feedback from young people whom participated informing the development of KPPP.

The following sections provide an overview of the delivery model and approach taken, and the lessons learnt from the set-up and delivery of the pilot programme. It has and has been informed by:

- observing two sessions running simultaneously at the attendance centre;
  - Session 1 - run by the Tangere Arts company and a YOT worker, whom worked with a small group of young people who observed a presented theatre scene covering issues related to consequences for families of knife victims left behind, the social and criminal consequences and discussions on dealing with anger.
  - Session 2 - run by the YOT practitioners with another group of young people featuring a DVD on victims of knife crime and their families and friends, involved group discussions and debates based on worked scenarios and role play to identify choice pathways
- Discussions with the deputy officer in charge of the attendance centre, who developed the programme for Nottingham City;
- Nottingham City YOT Operational Manager;
- Nottingham City YOT practitioners; and
- Young people participating;

## Approach to delivery

Nottingham City had already responded to the concerns raised about the use of knives and guns and had developed Piece by Piece a DVD and resource pack focussed on prevention across the mainstream and YOT clientele prior the KPPP. Developed in partnership with the Police, Education and Victim Support its focus was to create a resource that could be easily adaptable to any practitioner working with young people in the Nottingham area. It takes into account the diverse learning styles and the differing concentration spans of clients and how they may be schooled.

The use of [www.piecebypiece.org.uk](http://www.piecebypiece.org.uk) gave Nottingham and its professionals access to an educational resource, with its clear aim to raise awareness among young people of the causes and consequences of weapon crime, and to encourage them to make choices in their lives which reduce the level of weapon carrying and weapon related incidents. Elements of Piece by Piece have also been used in the work of the Street Conflict group, which focuses on working with gangs and young people in Nottingham, the resources were helpful here and

feedback from young people was positive in highlighting the use and consequences of carrying of knives and informed the work of KPPP.

Nottingham City YOT received £24,450 of funding to develop KPPP and developed a 4 session programme with 2 additional sessions for training and evaluation for staff.

The programme modules are delivered in mixed group sessions. Each session is 90mins in duration. The groups are a mix of offender profiles, and not only include those with the designated referral criteria but also include those that may be identified as at risk from being involved with or a potential victim of knives or weapons in general. There is a robust risk management process in place to assist in planning the group cohorts.

The programme offers young people an informed perspective of the implications and consequences of knife crime. It focuses on interaction and reflection on life choices and the emotional decisions they make in situations they encounter. Nottingham City have used drama to draw out this focus and enhance the delivery of the programme by using techniques that develop the self esteem of young people and help them to see how their actions in scenarios affect others.

An overview of the programme is described in the table below:

Week	Modules	Overview
Week 1	Brief on the session around Health and the Law	Legal aspects of what to expect if caught in possession/using a knife. Encourage young people in groups to act as magistrates, what would they sentence young people caught with knives to? Includes the use of interview with QMC surgeon, contained within the 'Piece by Piece' DVD. Backed up by links made with YOT nurses on consequences of knife crime
Week 2	Tangere Arts - Session 1 - Exploring attitudes to knives and the Social Implications	Led by two actors from the Tangere Arts company, using "Romeo & Juliet" they present a short contemporary theatre scene, from the parent's perspective looking at young people & knife culture. Using still image, hot-seating and interactive drama techniques exploring attitudes to carrying knives and the rules young people apply to their lives, fear of crime, territoriality, and gangs? And Social Implications of weapon carrying – impact on family, community
Week 3	Tangere Arts - Session 2 - Managing conflict and emotion	Using interactive drama techniques and masks the actors work with the young people to look at how they might get stuck with an attitude/behaviour. Looking at emotional intelligence skills – how do people express anger? How can they stand up for themselves /protect themselves? There is also a Self esteem exercise- discussing issues around trust? Who gives the young people feedback? Managing conflict, helping young people understand their experience of youth violence, mediation skills

Week 4	Public Space awareness, and victim awareness	<p>Led by Nottingham City YOT practitioners. There are two elements to this section:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first will look at the issue of revenge and the culture of revenge behaviour. The aim of this section is to look at the levels of revenge along with how young people see what ‘acceptable’ revenge in their eyes is. The other element is what scenarios are ranked higher or lower in relation to what would be avenged to what would be let go. Would this be different in a gang, crew, boys situation or when alone? Is there a need for gang mentality, what does this provide for the individual/member?</li> <li>2. The second section will specifically look at Victims of crime which moves on from the effects of revenge. The main examples of this will be using Knife crime as the focal point to highlight how this can result in fatalities. The session intends to evoke the emotional feelings that young people so readily detach from when in the mode of crime. Young offenders so very often lose the understanding of victims and we aim to bring about an awareness of such victims weather that be the immediate victim of their actions to another person/s or the ripple effect they create. Possibly use the victim interview contained in ‘Piece by Piece’ DVD.</li> </ol>
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### Lessons learnt

The following section provides the views, experiences and operational lessons learnt in the design and development of the approach.

### Delivering against KPPP modules

Nottingham City YOT have used the KPPP guidance to deliver a holistic provision of its sessions covering the 8 criteria areas required by the YJB. Practitioners have taken a pragmatic approach to delivery and have created a tailored programme for their locality and demand levels.

One key challenge has been the timescales for the pilot and to mitigate these practitioners were clear that they use the best elements of what had worked well in their previous initiatives. This is one of the main reasons for working with Tangere Arts to deliver two of the sessions. It was also a key reason in having a shorter delivery structure. It was felt that by merging learning outcomes the condensed programme would enable young people remain committed as well as enter the programme more quickly rather than waiting for the new sequence to begin. It also impacted on attendance at the sessions as it encouraged those on final warnings to participate.

It is important to note that the YOT is not averse to extending the number of sessions, and will evaluate this through their service user feedback process. Equally as the programme develops there will be further opportunity to include the wider partnership network contributing to delivery in areas such as peer education and health.

### Design and Development

In designing the programme, the experience and previous learning from the YOT and Attendance centre practitioners was a helpful basis to build on. The YOT resources officer coordinated the proposed programme but equally the wider team including the Deputy Head

of Service and the Deputy Officer in charge of the Attendance centre were critical to the development of the KPPP.

Nottingham City YOT has used both commissioned and in house resources to support its programme design. It uses a mix of resources, and combines those previously developed in this area such as Piece by Piece and materials such as the tooled up for schools DVD, a short film depicting a stabbing at school and a workbook with exercises on gangs and young people.

The programme is designed to maximise engagement and manage concentration levels, it takes into account the different learning styles and mixes them well in the structure of the programme. It is flexible and responsive to the needs of the particular cohort of young people involved, so it can adjust the lesson plan to account for areas needing further exploration depending on the offender profile.

The order in which the 4 sessions are delivered have been carefully designed to ensure that the learning complement and build on each other through the programme. The first session is delivered by YOT and attendance centre practitioners; it sets the scene well and lays the ground work in terms of law and implications of criminality associated with knives, as well as some health aspects.

The following two sessions then focus on the commissioned resource, supplied by Tangere Arts Theatre of Group which involves actors facilitating and dramatising scenarios and take material elements from the interviews within Piece by Piece, supported by an accompanying handbook. The focus here is on how the young people react and respond to real life situations and how victims live with the consequences of the offending behaviour. The use of professional actors helps to bring to life a scenario, it creates a forum to discuss and debate but the real benefit is to see the emotive nature of what victims feel. The YOT have taken the opportunity to up skill their in house staff in learning drama techniques also to bring to life the facilitative work they do with young people so going forward their delivery options are flexible.

The final session with young people is once again delivered by YOT practitioners, where the focus continues to be on reinforcing how offender behaviour impacts on those associated with knife crime offences. It centres its messaging on emotion and the anger that can lead to the desire to take revenge. Practitioners felt this was one of the most effective sessions in the programme as it concentrates on the ripple effect and the mentality of groups and gangs. It leads to the demonstration of emotion and feeling and often the young people express this in a physical response. This leads the practitioners to develop discussion topics and identify some of the main causes of association with knives that can then be referred on to the individual's case worker.

The challenges have centred around how to evolve the impact of peer education. Though this is covered in the supporting materials such as DVD's, the use of ex -offenders in delivery of the sessions is not currently a feature. Nor is the involvement of victims themselves though this is powerfully played in by the actors in from Tangere Arts. The YOT raised concerns about capacity and resources to deliver across the programme and feels that partnership contribution would help to evolve the programmes content and wider influence.

### **Partnership working**

Strategically the programme has been built on the partnership work that the City Crime and Drugs partnership has been developing around knife related violence such as the No More Knives web site ([www.nomoreknives.com](http://www.nomoreknives.com)) and a youth conference delivery

programme. The partnership has commissioned an Engaging young people at risk programme to identify and intervene with those at risk of being drawn into group criminality and this will be complemented by some work being done on positive activities.

Engagement with partners at an operational level has been challenging given the timescale of the pilot. It is also acknowledged that there is a lack of joined up working across the serious youth violence piece and it is important to link up both the strategic and operational delivery points. During the early stages of development the YOT has had some challenges around Health engagement through trying to access A & E support. However, they have mitigated this by working with YOT nurses whom are now taking a role in delivering session 1 which is very positive for the programme.

The involvement of other partners like the police has been in the development of the materials such as Piece by Piece and 'nomoreknives'. YOT based police officers are also involved in follow up work with on reprimands or final warnings.

The YOT has separately bid for a restorative approach co-ordinator in April 2009 to support the programme, focus on partnership access to the programme, and widen the opportunities available to contribute, for example with Schools.

### **Performance monitoring tools**

Nottingham City YOT have used ASSET scores to assess offender levels. Currently, there is no self evaluation feedback following each session. However, the service user evaluation recently commissioned by the YOT has highlighted this as a recommendation for inclusion in the programme going forward. There is also no formal process for updating case workers for those attending group sessions or vice versa. The introduction of caseworker feedback from 1-2-1 supervision during the course would be helpful for practitioners running sessions, managing any risk or concerns relating to the sessions. There is also no attitudinal survey in place and this would be most useful in benchmarking early signs of behavioural change at the start and at the conclusion of in the programme.

### **Referral criteria**

It was acknowledged that the criteria excluded a large number of potential clients that could benefit from the approach. Feedback from practitioners and YOT leads indicated that the referral criteria would have potential benefits if it was widened to include those convicted of street crime offences such as robbery. A widening scope would also have consequences on how the intervention was run. This might mean potentially developing a two level programme, those at low risk and those at higher risk for weapon carrying. Nottingham City has already included those young people they deem to be at risk and this has helped them to develop a focused prevention programme.

### **Impact on client behaviours**

Nottingham City YOT have commissioned a service user evaluation that concluded in March 2009. It was conducted by the Children's Participation consultancy service. It reflects the feedback of young people who attended one of four courses that were run between November 2008-March 2009. They interviewed 15 young people (13 males, 2 females) whose ages ranged from 13-18. The majority had attended 3-4 sessions, with the most well attended being the last session. There were 3 main areas of focus for the study, the views of course content and style, learning, and attitude. There were also additional comments on the workers and environment of the course.

The following outlines their findings - Source - **Knife Crime Programme Young People's Post- course Feedback - March 2009**

**Content and Style** - The young people were very positive about the programme. When asked about the style of delivery they particularly enjoyed the group work and the use of posters and DVD. There was a shift in comments about the drama sessions during the time period. Following a mixed and mainly negative response from the first group, the young people in the subsequent groups were much more positive and said that they had enjoyed it. The majority felt, however, that the most useful sessions were the first and the last session, which was led by the YOT themselves from their in house provision as it was more 'real' and made them think more, and the last session was their favourite (**92% of young people**). **86%** of young people thought the course was 'real' enough.

*"Before the course I really wouldn't have thought of some of these things"*

*I seen myself in the DVD...you can lose a life like THAT!*

**Learning** - The majority of the young people were clear that the course had given them a lot of new learning (**77%**). The young people were asked if they felt they had learnt something new and to explain what that learning was. All of the young people (**100%**) had clearly learned a lot about the law (particularly about it being illegal to carry knives and the sentence associated with this) and how easy it is to injure someone. **93%** felt they had an increase in their understanding of how dangerous knife crime is. They all mentioned the impact of the last session, and described feeling like it could be their family or friends that had been killed. **60%** of the young people were able to describe new ways to deal with conflict, and give examples of how they had used this.

*"It gave me a new way of thinking...about the people who get affected...the family of innocent victims"*

*"It's really dangerous. You can get stabbed anywhere and still die, there isn't a safe place you can stab someone."*

**Attitudes** - Two thirds (**66%**) of the young people felt that having attended the course they would stop carrying knives. There were many comments about it not being worth the hassle and the possible court sentence, and about it increasing their own risk of being killed or killing someone over a small thing. The rest (**27%**) felt they would be less likely to carry a knife, with just one saying he would continue. The most frequent reasons for having carried a knife were for protection and to impress or fit in with friends.

*"until someone proves to me I'm safe. It'll never stop"*

*"even with friends now, if they've got a knife I don't bother with them"*

Clearly, the focus on assessing perception in terms of attitude changes to knives was the key point of the evaluation and very useful to the YOT and wider interest groups in developing the programme. The biggest areas of impact on young people were notably, an increased understanding and perception of the dangers of knife injuries, the law and its implications, and the empathy for families of knife crime victims.

It was felt that the environment to which the course is delivered is very important. In order to feel safe young people did not want the course to take place in an area of the City where there may be a perceived threat for them. The YOT should consider area bases locations that may be suitable and what access they could have to partnership premises for delivering the programme.

Young people liked the small group environment they felt this allowed them the opportunity to express themselves and that adequate time was given by the practitioners to deal with any concerns they may have had. They were generally positive and engaging and clearly the YOT practitioners are highly skilled at facilitation and delivering messages in an emotive and 'real' way.

### Credibility

Early on in the programmes implementation, the YOT engaged with Youth Panel leads and there was an early commitment to ensure that the programme was written into all relevant pre-sentence specific reports to ensure sentencers are aware.

### Sustainability

Nottingham City YOT have developed a programme that in its current form would require continued funding, particularly if it were to continue the commissioned arrangement with Tangere Arts.

The programme relies equally on the commitment of YOT staff to deliver through additional overtime and this should not be underestimated. The YOT are committed to continuing this programme as part of its mainstream activity and have taken steps to develop new options for the programme if further funding was not awarded. These include training the YOT staff to deliver the Tangere Arts sessions saving £12,000 and or alternatively engaging further with the wider partner network to deliver specific sessions, such as health, youth services and police officers. These amongst many others are being considered and the programme continues to evolve. The service user evaluation has provided a baseline for continuation and this was a very positive process for those involved in delivering.



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