



Spotlight on Wrexham and Flintshire Youth Justice Services

Wrexham Youth Justice and Flintshire Youth Justice Services are the winner of the Pearson Award for Continued Best Practice in Youth Justice at the 2013/14 Shine a Light Awards, for their work with young people with speech, language and communication needs. Wrexham Youth justice were highly commended at last year's ceremony.

Both services this year were recognised by judges for their continued communication project ensuring that young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are identified and supported in the criminal justice system.

Both Wrexham and Flintshire Youth Justice Services work with children and young people aged 8-18 years in order to prevent offending and re-offending. Originally the project was based within the Wrexham Youth Justice Service and the success of this led to the project being developed to cover Flintshire ensuring more children and young people are supported.

Supporting children and young people's communication is a high priority for the services with all staff receiving SLCN training. This includes police, YJS case holders, child and adolescent mental health workers (CAMHS), prevention workers, substance misuse and housing and victim liaison officers. A communication policy is in place that ensures all new staff joining the Youth Justice Service receives SLCN awareness training as a mandatory requirement.

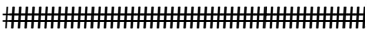
Through hard work and dedication the teams accessed funding for a full-time Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) across the communication project. Speech and Language is now considered in both services' strategic planning and therefore funding streams are prioritised for this area.

The teams work with young people ensuring an exit strategy is firmly in place once a young person has finished a court order with the Youth Justice Service or after they complete a prevention programme. This involves multi-agency working with others professionals and agencies and referring to mainstream SLT services if necessary.

Since the project's inception in 2011, over 120 referrals have been received and in Flintshire the referrals accepted have increased by 95%. 60% of the young people referred for SLT support in the first 12 months are currently not known to either the Youth Justice Service or probation services. One of the communication project's aims is to look at re-offending rates from those young people who have received SLT intervention.

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The judges were impressed by the team's adoption of very effective strategies and policies to identify and support young people with SLCN. Both young people and other teams and agencies have given Wrexham and Flintshire Youth Justice Services excellent feedback.



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