Call with T1B Devon YJS Manager

21/05/2025

Headlines

- Existing experience working with children referred from Channel
- Agrees there is a role to play with these children - key strength of YJS's is relationship building and work to build pro-social attitude, it doesn't matter so much what the behaviour is
- Barriers are not insurmountable – usual ones around joined up local partnership working, funding/ resource for early intervention etc.

T1B sits on the Channel Panel in Devon and so was able to talk through two case studies.

Child A – Child has been going through Channel process for long time – police concerned about them but child not giving consent so cannot be referred for a Channel intervention. Conversation at the moment about YJS offering to work with them but not sure what exactly this would look like. YJS would not have any more statutory levers to compel child to engage but the hope is they may be more amenable to working with YJ practitioners. Feeling that this child may quite like justice involvement and see it as a "badge of honour". Child is almost 18 so would not have long to work with them.

Child B – Child went through Channel process and was given an intervention. The provider worked with them for a while and then the child received a youth conditional caution so ended up in YJS's case-list. Child was allocated a YJ worker but they had better relationship with intervention provider so lots of consultation with the provider and multiagency working to support them. It was an experienced YJ practitioner who had the case but they felt a lack of confidence around how to work with child with ASD need and felt like it was doing something new as working with Channel. Forensic CAHMS provided really helpful support in working with this child.

Key issues/ barriers to working with VFI children:

- Identification – these children may present very similarly to others, how do you know whether a child is going to go down this pathway
- Internet use – online world outside of YOTs influence. Need work with tech companies to tackle online activity.
- Siloed working – Children handed between different processes while facing same vulnerabilities eg Channel panel / CCE – need the systems and local partners to be joined up to address child's need.
- Resource – need for LT funding to dedicate to early intervention work (not such a problem in Devon but in other areas). Trend of working with more children for shorter time – but likely these children will need long term sustained relationships.

Information / intelligence sharing was not identified as a particular issue in these cases.

- Channel information (including minutes) can't be saved on files but relevant information did filter through in the cases mentioned through conversations with partners.
- Noone in team has special clearances but T1B sits on channel panel and security clearances have never been an issue.

Broader point about information sharing before a child is referred to YOT - in Devon conversations with police and social care only tends to happen once a child is referred To YJS. T1B felt it would be better to have proactive information sharing with police and social care to be aware of cases ahead of this. In both cases discussed if they hadn't gone to Channel YJS would not be aware of them.