



# Evaluation of School, Social Work, Police and Community (SSPC) Project

**East Renfrewshire Council  
East Renfrewshire CHCP and Partners**

**Final Report**

**Norma Hurley  
Shelley Dorrans  
David Orr  
Jenny Eaves**

May 2008

**1 Melville Park, Edinburgh, EH28 8PJ**  
PH: 44(0)131 335 3700 FX 44(0)131 333 1033  
admin@blakestevenson.co.uk www.blakestevenson.co.uk

**Crane House, 19 Apex Business Park, Annitsford, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE23 7BF**  
PH: 44(0)0191 250 1969 FX: 44(0)191 250 2563

Directors: Norma Hurley and Glenys Watt

# Contents

Section	Page
1 Introduction.....	2
2 Questions and Challenges .....	6
3 Methodology .....	10
4 Evaluation Findings .....	17
5 Conclusions and Recommendations .....	53



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2005 East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) made a commitment to implement an approach to preventing and addressing youth crime and anti social behaviour, based on Danish principles.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 The resulting project, School, Social Work, Police and Community (SSPC) is led by Social Work and has been recognised by the Youth Justice and Anti Social Behaviour sections of the (then) Scottish Executive as an example of best practice.
- 1.3 The Pilot, over the period April 2006-April 2008, has been funded mainly by the Scottish Government, with some additional funding from East Renfrewshire Council's Anti-Social Behaviour monies. Most of this funding has been used to employ three campus police officers in three High Schools in East Renfrewshire.
- 1.4 ERC Anti Social Behaviour monies also funded the appointment of a young person's SSPC support worker (2006-2008). Total funding for these posts over two years is approximately £320,000. This includes training and materials, and IT support and running costs, for the campus police officers.
- 1.5 The aim of the SSPC project is to build an alliance of professionals that:
  - improves opportunities for young people to participate positively in the community – thereby increasing inclusion;
  - improves the effective targeting of diversionary resources, joining up "Youth Service" and "Youth Justice" resources;
  - implements a multi agency operational group that would jointly consider referrals on young people at the earliest opportunity, following resources and review outcomes – called the Young Person's Referral Group (YPRG);
  - increases resources to address areas of need in the community, including the employment of campus police officers within school settings; and
  - integrates the SSPC and YPRG activities into the wider children and families strategic planning.

---

<sup>1</sup> For the background to the development of the Pilot see the sources listed in Appendix 1 of the Technical Appendix document



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 1.6 SSPC does the above through the practical use of:
- research information that informs about which conditions in childhood are more likely to lead to offending; and
  - detailed knowledge of communities and crime hot spots.
- 1.7 Key factors of success to date are considered to be:
- flexibility in the use of professional time, budgets and other resources;
  - early intervention;
  - community participation;
  - investing in young people's talents as well as addressing their problems.
- 1.8 The broad areas for intervention are:
- Prevention
  - Diversion
  - Early intervention
  - Specialist interventions with offenders
- 1.9 The Scottish Government (Youth Justice Team) wishes to conduct an evaluation of the whole SSPC Project, of which campus police officers is one element. The purpose of the evaluation in relation to the campus police officers is to:
- report on the use of allocated campus police officer monies – did they deliver value for money;
  - evaluate the impact of the project on young people in schools and the community; and
  - compare outcomes for young people with previous years.
- 1.10 The operational arm of the SSPC is the Young Persons Referral Group (YPRG), a multi-agency group which meets regularly (usually every three weeks) to discuss and determine possible options for young people referred to the Group because of minor offences, or concern that they are becoming involved in offending behaviour. The Group's membership is broad and includes representatives from Social Work Youth Justice, Police, Reporter, Youth Services, Schools, Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour Team, and Voluntary Sector Criminal Justice Agencies.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 1.11 The YPRG is accountable to the core Children's Service Planning (CSP) Group, through the Young People's Steering Group – one of the CSP sub groups.
- 1.12 The aims of the YPRG are:
- to reduce anti-social behaviour and youth offending, increasing community safety thereby reducing youth crime and persistent offender rates;
  - to identify young people with the potential to offend and to provide a prompt, non-stigmatising diversionary response – thereby reducing referrals to the Reporter;
  - to increase the effectiveness of Council responses through sharing of information, goals, resources and budgets across departments;
  - to rationalise approaches to young people exhibiting anti-social and offending behaviour across Council departments, providing a measured and comprehensive response to community and agency concerns;
  - to intervene in young people's lives with clear purpose, effectively and with the least intrusion necessary;
  - to empower young people, parents/carers and community to address issues whenever possible;
  - to encourage social workers to consider the impact that young people's behaviour has on the community as well as on themselves and family
  - to progress local and national policy priorities – "GIRFEC"; reduction of Reporter referrals: National Youth Justice Standards; Integrated Assessment Framework etc.
- 1.13 The evaluation also looks at the operation of the Positive Participation Project. East Renfrewshire Council has committed to a 10 year Participation Project that aims to improve the positive participation of young people within their families and community. The project is managed as part of the SSPC approach and led by a multi-agency steering group which includes Scottish Government mental health organisations and voluntary sector children's organisations.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## Study Objectives

1.14 The study objectives are:

### *Funding*

- for the Scottish Government – to determine whether the funding allocated to the project is clearly additional and offers value for money and;
- to examine the extent to which the project “fits” with partner activity and whether there is the ability to mainstream all or part of the SSPC project.

### *Delivery of Outputs and Outcomes*

- identify and utilise the appropriate evaluation tools which measure the short term impact of the SSPC project, along with a high level analysis of the likely impact on long-term outcomes;
- establish whether or not the project has delivered against particular national and local outputs and outcomes (National Standards for Youth Justice; Community Safety);
- establish whether or not the project has delivered against specific outputs and outcomes that were anticipated at the start of the project;
- examine whether good systems are in place for tracking and reporting outputs and outcomes;
- ascertain what further outputs and outcomes (if any) arising from the 2 year pilot are envisaged and by when;
- identify what factors have hindered or facilitated the attainment of outputs and outcomes; and
- based on the experience of evaluating the SSPC project, recommend evaluation tools that would be appropriate to consider to monitor performance in the future.

## Output

1.15 The output from the work is this report to East Renfrewshire and the Scottish Government (Youth Justice Team).

## 2 Questions and Challenges

2.1 There have been a number of questions and challenges which we have taken into account in carrying out the evaluation and in producing this report.

2.2 The first objective for the evaluation is:

### Funding

- for the Scottish Government – to determine whether the funding allocated to the project is clearly additional and offers value for money.

2.3 This study is set within the context of growing interest within the Scottish Government and Audit Scotland into how and to what extent value for money in the field of youth justice can be evidenced. Audit Scotland's Performance Update on "Dealing With Offending by Young People" August 2007 states that:

*"More programmes are now available for young people who offend, but the extent to which these services offer value for money and are making effective use of resources cannot yet be demonstrated."*

2.4 With regard to value for money, the report states specifically:

*"It is important that funding is directed towards services that will deliver appropriate and effective outcomes. For this to happen, youth justice professionals must understand the nature and pattern of offending by young people in their area, and the extent to which local services to prevent or address offending by young people are meeting local need"*

2.5 Although Audit Scotland recommended in 2002 that the then Scottish Executive should develop a system for auditing local need and for setting outcome indicators, neither of these systems is yet in place.

2.6 The context within which this study has taken place therefore is one in which there are not yet specific national Scottish Government guidelines which could assist with a value for money assessment of a service such as SSPC.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 2.7 A key question we have used in this evaluation to try to address the Scottish Government and Audit Scotland's concerns and interests is:

*To what extent do the activities of SSPC demonstrate a good understanding of the nature and pattern of offending by young people in their area, and to what extent does the SSPC service, which is about preventing and addressing offending by young people, actually meet local need?*

- 2.8 A number of sub-questions or proxy questions have been developed in order to help answer the above over-arching question:

- *What evidence is there of a shared understanding of the nature and pattern of offending by young people in the area?*
- *Has the YPRG acted swiftly and effectively to improve outcomes for young people?*
- *Have youth service and youth justice resources been joined up in order to improve the effective targeting of diversionary resources?*
- *Have resources increased to address areas of need, including employment of campus police officers within school settings – and has this been effective?*
- *Have the SSPC and YPRG activities been integrated into the wider children and families strategic planning?*
- *Are there now improved opportunities for disadvantaged young people to participate positively in the community thereby increasing inclusion?*

- 2.9 A second key question of interest to Audit Scotland and the Scottish Government is:

*Is there evidence of funding and other resources being directed towards services which meet identified local need?*

- 2.10 Assessing value for money is always extremely difficult and especially so in the case of interventions such as preventative or diversionary activities. The nature of these activities means that proving a causal link between the input from the agency concerned and the output or outcome obtained is complicated by the existence of numerous variables which can impact on the young person and his or her circumstances and behaviour. There is also a time factor to be considered. This pilot has only been in operation since 2006



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

and it is arguably too early to be able to assess the medium to long term impact of the activities of the SSPC and YPRG.

- 2.11 We have used the National Audit Office (NAO) Value for Money Framework as a tool to assist us with examining the value for money of the SSPC.
- 2.12 The NAO distinguishes between inputs – the resources used to produce the service – staff materials etc; outputs – the service provided in terms of actions and results achieved, and outcomes – the impact of the service. These concepts are linked through the three “e”s of the Framework – economy – spending less on inputs; efficiency – maximum output from minimum input; and effectiveness – achieving what was set out to achieve.

## Mainstreaming

- 2.13 The second objective for the evaluation has been to:
- examine the extent to which the project “fits” with partner activity and whether there is the ability to mainstream all or part of the SSPC project.
- 2.14 Mainstreaming is a somewhat ambiguous term but from work elsewhere we understand there to be two broad approaches to understanding “mainstreaming”.
- 2.15 The first is that a project or initiative which has been funded through short term or pilot funding is then taken “in house” by the relevant organisation – frequently the local authority - and funded thereafter from the mainstream budget.
- 2.16 The second approach is that the changes in staff’s ways of working and/or changes in mainstream management structures, and in organisational cultures, which have developed through and as a result of the project, are “mainstreamed”. This means that the new or different working practices and/or management systems are adopted across the organisation (or all organisations in the case of a partnership situation).
- 2.17 We have examined both approaches in this evaluation.
- 2.18 The third objective for the evaluation is:

## Delivery of Outputs and Outcomes

- establish whether or not the project has delivered against specific outputs and outcomes that were anticipated at the start of the project;



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- establish whether or not the project has delivered against particular national and local outputs and outcomes (National Standards for Youth Justice; Community Safety);
- ascertain what further outputs and outcomes (if any) arising from the 2 year pilot are envisaged and by when;
- examine whether good systems are in place for tracking and reporting outputs and outcomes;
- identify what factors have hindered or facilitated the attainment of outputs and outcomes; and
- identify and utilise the appropriate evaluation tools which measure the short term impact of the SSPC project, along with a high level analysis of the likely impact on long-term outcomes.

2.19 A key area for examination in the evaluation has been the outcomes which the SSPC and the YPRG set out to achieve, and the progress towards these outcomes.

2.20 Our methodology for answering all the above questions is set out in Chapter 3 and the findings from the study are in Chapter 4.

### 3 Methodology

3.1 In shaping our evaluation of the SSPC model we recognised that it had three key constituent elements: the Young People's Referral Group (YPRG), the Campus Police Officers (CPOs) and the Positive Participation project. While appreciating that overlaps existed across these elements, we investigated each of them independently to identify their particular and specific contributions.

3.2 The methods we used in the evaluation are as follows:

#### Stage 1

- Desk research
- Development of evaluation tools

#### Stage 2

- Observation
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Interviews with staff
- Focus groups with young people in schools, including use of a "feelings gauge" tool
- Interviews with young people with direct experience of the YPRG along with their parents/carers

#### Stage 3

- Analysis
- Report writing



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## Stage 1:

### *Desk Research*

- 3.3 A variety of different sources of information were used to put the SSPC model in context. These included:
- Briefing Paper – Proposal to Introduce Campus Police Officers within an SSP Framework in Schools in East Renfrewshire Council September 2005 CHCP
  - Draft Proposal to introduce Campus Police Officers within an SSP framework in schools in East Renfrewshire Council (Strathclyde Police) 2005
  - Process and Outcome Evaluation of the Young People's Referral Group (September 2006 CHCP)
  - Campus Police Report January 2008
  - "Have Your Say" Report

### *Statistical Data*

- 3.4 The principal source of statistical data used was the YPRG spreadsheet and the focus of our research was on the period September 2006 – February 2008.
- 3.5 We have also gathered data from a number of other sources listed in the Technical Appendix.

### *Process Data*

- 3.6 We gathered in background data about the processes used in the SSPC. This included data on:
- assessment criteria used to decide on referral to YPRG;
  - referral and information sharing;
  - performance management, reporting and recording systems.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## *Progress and Change Data*

- 3.7 In seeking to assess progress and change over the period since September 2006 we gained access to and analysed minutes from the:
- Young People's Referral Group
  - Young People's Steering Group (Sub-Group of the Core Childrens' Services Group)
  - Participation Group
- 3.8 Within this documentation, we were looking for evidence of joint planning, joint working and effective sharing of information and communication across agencies.

## *Resource Data*

- 3.9 The Scottish Government awarded a total of £250,800 for the two year pilot. This funding included paying for two campus police officers for the first year and for three in the second year, plus training materials and IT support, and the cost of this evaluation.
- 3.10 East Renfrewshire Council paid for one campus police officer in the first year, £41,000, and for the Young Person's Support worker for two years, approximately £60,000.
- 3.11 The initiative took up around one quarter of the working week of the Service Manager involved, which would amount to £13,500. (All salaries include costs.)
- 3.12 All other staff involved in attending YPRG meetings did so as part of their professional role.
- 3.13 The total direct resources going into the pilot are therefore: £305,302.

## *Development of Evaluation Tools*

- 3.14 We developed a range of tools to use in the evaluation and copies of these are included in the Technical Appendix.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## Stage 2

- Observation
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Interviews with staff
- Focus groups with young people in schools and use of a “feelings gauge” tool
- Interviews with young people with direct experience of the YPRG along with their parents/carers

### *Observation*

- 3.15 Recognising the central importance of the YPRG as a decision-making body and as the “engine room” of the SSPC model, we felt that it would be appropriate to observe the Group in action.
- 3.16 In January 2008 we observed the meeting of the YPRG to gain a sense of the processes, relationships, and dynamics within the group from an external viewpoint. We were also provided with full minutes of the meeting following the observation session.

### *Interviews with Key Stakeholders*

- 3.17 A range of key individuals were interviewed for the purposes of the evaluation with a view to establishing their perspectives on the YPRG and the SSPC model. The interviewees included:

(\* = attend YPRG meetings)

### ***Social Work***

- \*Wendy Harrington, Service Manager, Social Work, Children and Families (former Chair of YPRG has since moved to a new post. New Chair is Louise Long from Social Work)
- \*Raymond Prior, Youth Justice Team Manager, ERC
- \*Kevin Atherton, Social Worker Youth Justice Team, ERC
- Jim Sneddon, Head of Community Resources, ERC
- \*Mark Mulhern, Community Learning and Development Manager



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- \*Suzie Smith, Community Worker, ERC
- \*Jim Burns, Community Worker, ERC
- \*Carol McIlwaine, Young People's Support Worker, ERC (based in Youth Justice Team)

## **SCRA**

- \*Julie Paterson and Lisa Woolfson, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)

## **SACRO**

- Shona Hamilton, Service Manager (SACRO)
- \*Harry Murray, Youth Justice Worker (SACRO)

## **Renfrewshire Council on Alcohol**

- \*Moira Docherty (since left)

## **Police**

- \*Sergeant Crawford Weir, Community Safety (Strathclyde Police)
- \*Mark Armstrong, Campus Police Officer (Strathclyde Police)
- \*Susan Greer, Campus Police Officer (Strathclyde Police)
- \*Mike Greville, Campus Police Officer (Strathclyde Police)

## **Education**

- \*Charlie Johnston, Quality Improvement Officer (Education), ERC
- Morag Toundrow, Headteacher, Barrhead High School, ERC
- David Gordon, Depute Headteacher, St. Luke's High School, ERC



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- \*Joe Herd, Social Justice and Communities Manager, St Luke's High School
- Duncan Rose, Behaviour Manager, Woodfarm High School, ERC
- Roslyn Redpath, Depute Principal Psychologist, ERC

3.18 A generic interview schedule was utilised for the purpose of these interviews allowing for the focus to be modified subject to the particular insights and expertise of the interviewee.

3.19 We also met separately with Wendy Harrington and with Mary Gallagher, Operations Manager, Children and Families Services in East Renfrewshire Council to look at the initial findings from the research.

### *Positive Participation Project*

3.20 For the Positive Participation Project, we spoke with:

- Roslyn Redpath (Chair), Depute Principal Psychologist, ERC (Wendy Harrington was Chair until 12 months ago)
- Selwyn McCausland, Participation Development Co-ordinator (Barnardo's)
- Kirstie Farmer, National Development Worker (Participation) (Penumbra)
- Mark Mulhern, Community Learning and Development Manager, ERC

### *Focus Groups with Young People in Schools and use of a "Feelings Gauge" Tool*

3.21 Focus groups with young people ranging in age from S1 to S6 took place in:

- Barrhead High School
- St. Luke's High School
- Woodfarm High School

3.22 The young people who attended also completed "Feelings of Safety" response forms.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## *Interviews with Young People with Direct Experience of the YPRG along with their Parents/carers*

- 3.23 We interviewed six parents and five young people (one young person did not turn up) who had had direct experience of the YPRG. We used an informal, autobiographical format for these interviews and subsequently compared the interview notes on the experience of the young people and their parents/carers with the case notes from the YPRG.

## *Stage 3: Analysis and Report Writing*

- 3.24 We have analysed all the data from the quantitative and qualitative research to enable us to answer the key research questions set out in Chapter 2.
- 3.25 We have analysed all interview and focus group data manually, seeking to identify key themes and issues.
- 3.26 We have collated statistical data for the period September 2006 - February 2008 into tables.
- 3.27 We have made project "succession" recommendations, provided information about the applicability of the model in Scotland and made recommendations on future appropriate evaluation tools.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## 4 Evaluation Findings

- 4.1 We have analysed all the field work and desk research in order to address the key questions for the evaluation, as follows:

**Question 1: Is the funding additional and does it deliver value for money?**

### *Additional and Additionality*

- 4.2 We are interpreting the term “additional” both in the sense of East Renfrewshire Council receiving additional monies for posts, and in terms of “additionality” – that is, how far would the SSPC’s outcomes have been met without the investment in the pilot. We return to this question at the end of this chapter after all the evidence has been examined.

### **Value for Money**

- 4.3 Audit Scotland sees value for money as relating to

*“the extent to which the activities of SSPC demonstrate a good understanding of the nature and pattern of offending by young people in their area, and the extent to which the SSPC service, which is about preventing and addressing offending by young people, actually meets local need.*

***What evidence is there of a shared understanding of the nature and pattern of offending by young people in the area?***

- 4.4 Evidence that there is a shared understanding of the nature and pattern of offending by young people in the area has been provided by:

- Documentary evidence – for example minutes of the YPRG, the six monthly report from the YPRG Chair (September 2007) the January 2008 report from the Campus Police, and examination of case files
- Statistical evidence drawn from the YPRG database
- Observation of a meeting of the YPRG
- Interviews with key informants



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 4.5 The YPRG meets every three weeks and contains in its membership almost all parties who would have an interest in and responsibility for young people who may be offending or at risk of becoming involved in offending behaviour. Notes on the young people who are to be considered at each meeting are sent out in advance so that Group members have an opportunity to ask colleagues for any relevant information they might have about the young person. This means that the fullest possible information on the young person's situation at school, in the community, and at home should be available to the Group when it meets.
- 4.6 There is a high level of trust amongst the members of the Group and they have developed an appropriate balance between respecting the confidentiality of the young people, whilst also ensuring that all information relevant to helping the young people is shared. There are systems for ensuring that papers and minutes are held securely, and individual members only receive full minuted details about the young people with whom they have agreed to work or be involved with.
- 4.7 The membership of the Group includes representatives from.
- Social Work Youth Justice
  - Education (Schools)
  - Reporter
  - Campus Police Officer
  - Community Police
  - Local Authority Liaison Officer (Police)
  - Community Safety
  - Housing
  - ASB Investigation Officer
  - Youth Services (Outreach)
  - SACRO
  - Young People's Support Worker
  - Renfrewshire Council on Alcohol
- 4.8 The name, and precise role of each of the members of the YPRG is given in the Technical Appendix.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 4.9 Some interviewees suggested that specific input from the Health Service, in particular from mental health services might be useful but this needs to be balanced against having a group which is of a manageable size. Representatives from the Health Sector have attended in order that they could assess for themselves whether they needed to attend each meeting. They shared the view of the Chair that this was not necessary but stated their willingness to be involved as required. The chair is a MHO and trained psychiatric social worker, so is in a reasonable position to identify and refer concerns.
- 4.10 Representatives from educational psychology are in constant touch with the Group and receive the names of young people so that they can feed in to the Group if necessary.
- 4.11 Experts from any relevant disciplines can be invited to the Group for a specific purpose and this seems to be an appropriate way of ensuring that all relevant support is available to a young person.

## ***The Nature of Offending***

- 4.12 The minutes of the YPRG set out the details of the individual cases that come before the Group. The total number of offences to have come before the Group between September 2006 (the date of the previous Evaluation Report produced by East Renfrewshire CHCP) and February 2008 is 187, committed by 143 individuals. The Group as a whole will by now have a good, shared understanding of the nature of low level offending by young people in the area. (This is the level of offending which the Group is tasked with dealing with.)
- 4.13 Clearly individual members of the Group would already have had varying levels of knowledge and insight into the nature and causes of youth offending but in interviews several members stated that being in the Group had given them a new perspective on this issue, and importantly enables them to act in a more coordinated manner in support of the young people: For example:

*“Because you have so many different agencies round the table, the value of the information that is brought to it is good. It’s (YPRG) opening up your eyes to different things” (Interviewee A)*

*“YPRG provides a wider picture of what is happening in young people’s lives” (Interviewee B)*

*“I deal with young people in a totally different way now. I hope that this is picked up throughout the whole organisation.” (Interviewee C)*

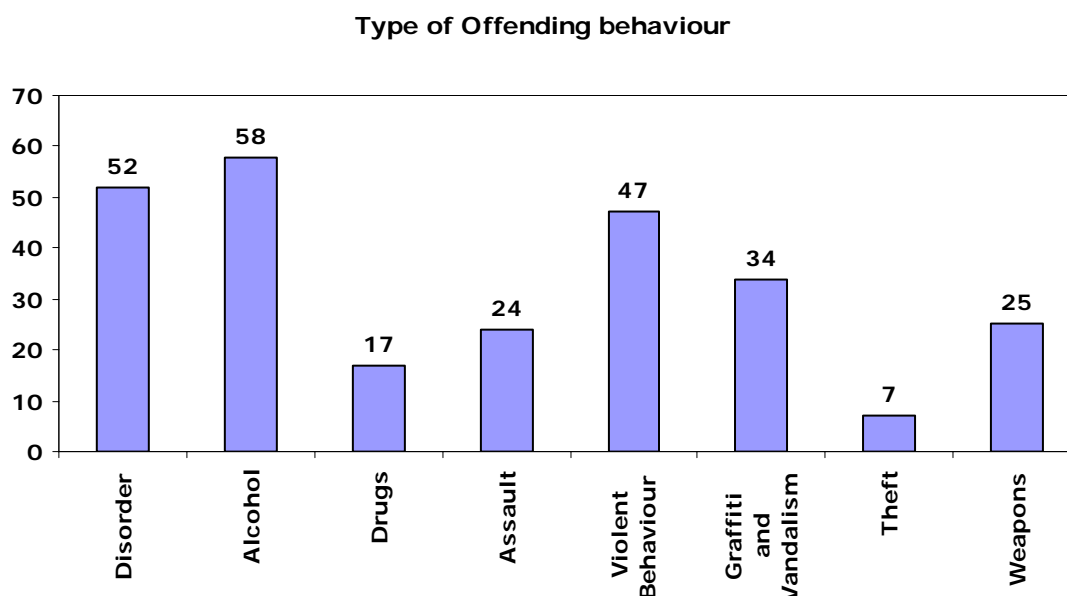
# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research Creating Action

*"In cases of tragedies investigations usually find lack of effective joint working and information sharing as contributory factors. That is now minimised in East Renfrewshire Council." (Interviewee D)*

4.14 The information shared and gained in YPRG discussions is supplemented by the statistical information available. Figure 1 shows the type of offence and the number of offences committed for the period September 2006 – February 2008. Alcohol, disorder and violent behaviour are the most common offences.

**Figure 1: Type of Offending Behaviour**



## ***Pattern of Offending***

4.15 The range of agencies represented on the YPRG enables information to be shared, not just on the particular circumstances of an individual who has been referred to the Group but also, importantly, for the Group to be alerted early to trends and patterns in offending behaviour in the community.

4.16 Specific instances of this include the police alerting the group to patterns in young women's behaviour and alcohol abuse, which resulted in a Girls and Alcohol Project being set up, and the Group identifying and addressing specific issues around hot spots, for example disturbances at local libraries.

4.17 The presence of the campus police officers enables them to share intelligence with the YPRG and schools about developments in the

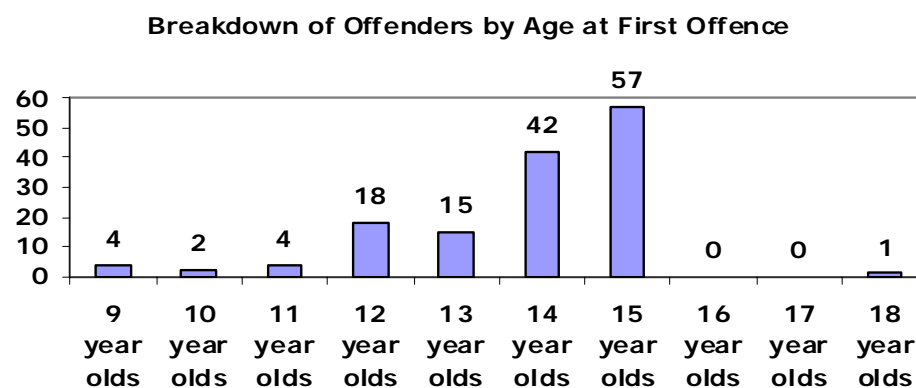
# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

community, for example gang behaviour, which could impact on schools and school pupils.

- 4.18 There are examples from the minutes of the YPRG and from interviews with key informants of early action being taken to intervene appropriately to support the young people who may be at risk of being drawn into gangs and gang fighting.
- 4.19 Outwith the YPRG there are also examples of organisations sharing information on the nature of offending which is then fed into the YPRG. For example, the East Renfrewshire Council CCTV control room can spot where young people may be involved in disorder or in truanting and inform the police so that they can act swiftly to contact the young people and, if appropriate, then refer individuals on to the YPRG.
- 4.20 The YPRG members can also use the statistical information on young people who are referred to them to gain a picture of what age offenders are, what sex they are, where offences are committed, and the nature and frequency of offences committed by the young people.
- 4.21 This information can support a strategic approach to more effective targeting of resources on preventing offending and supporting offenders and communities.
- 4.22 For example, Figure 2 shows that the peak ages for offending are 14 and 15 whilst Figure 3 shows that offending is overwhelmingly a problem for boys and young men which seems to increase dramatically at the transition from primary to secondary school.

**Figure 2: Breakdown of Offenders by Age at First Referral (n=143)**

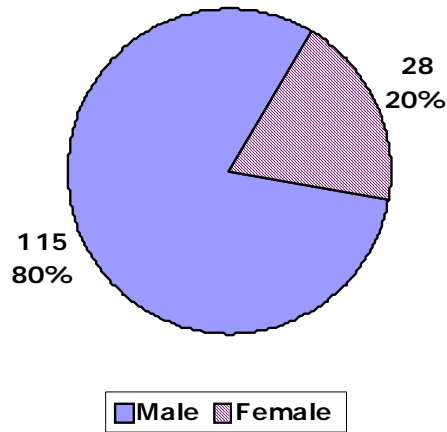


# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research Creating Action

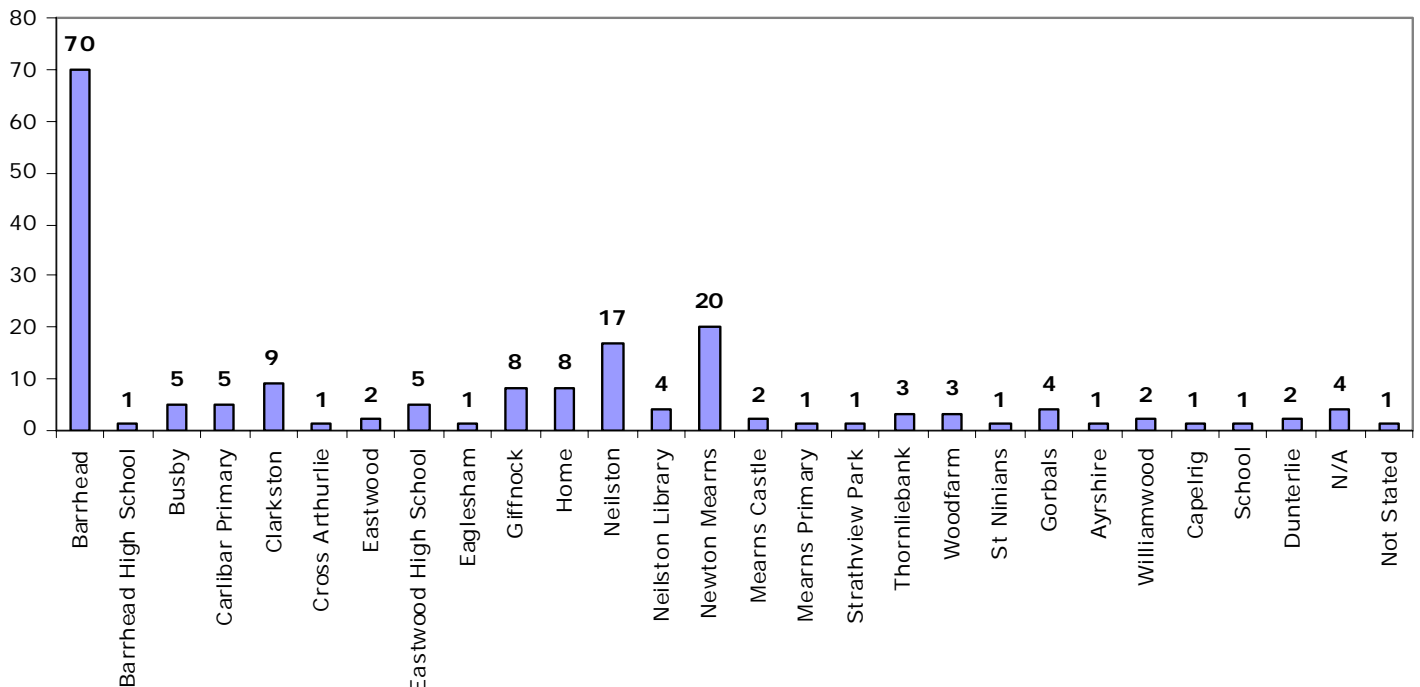
Figure 3: Gender Breakdown of Offenders (n=143)

Gender Breakdown of Offenders



4.23 Figure 4 below shows the number of offences by main location in East Renfrewshire.

Figure 4: Main Offence Location



4.24 The YPRG statistics complement police crime statistics and SCRA statistics but give a more detailed picture of the nature of relatively



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

low level offending or incidents of behaviour causing concern amongst 9–18 year olds across the whole of East Renfrewshire.

- 4.25 The spreadsheet is limited in that it is not a database and therefore does not allow for the full potential of the data to be easily accessed. However, it would not be a difficult task to develop a database to enable a range of useful cross-tabulated reports to be produced which could give an overall picture of offending analysed by a number of variables, such as type of offence, age of offender and school attended. This would be a useful management tool to inform allocation of early intervention and prevention resources.
- 4.26 This a development we would recommend and it may be that the development of the new Care First Six database by the CHCP could offer the additional functionality needed.
- 4.27 We would also suggest that, given the impact of family background and circumstances on the behaviour of the young person, it might be useful to have specific fields for data on family circumstances included in the YPRG database. We recognise that at present there is comment on parents relating to ill health, parental offending, and so on but the information as currently set out is not easy to aggregate or analyse.

**Table 1: YPRG Aim**

YPRG Aim:	Comment
To identify young people with the potential to offend and to provide a prompt, non-stigmatising diversionary response – thereby reducing referrals to the Reporter;	This aim would seem to be being met. Referrals to the Reporter on offence grounds have gone down, (see below for figures) and whilst it is not possible to categorically attribute this to the work of the YPRG it would not be unrealistic to infer at least some causal relationship. See more on this below under Outcomes

*Has the YPRG acted swiftly and effectively to improve outcomes for young people?*

### ***Swift and Early Intervention***

- 4.28 Through meeting every three weeks the YPRG is able to take swift action on behalf of young people. The fact that the young people are having early intervention is also of key importance. From observation, interviews, and the spreadsheet, it is clear that there is little delay between young people being referred and the Group



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

discussing their case and arriving at a decision on what might be the most appropriate action to help the young person.

- 4.29 Because of the range of organisations represented on the Group in many instances a number of members know the young person and their family and can provide useful information at the meeting which might otherwise require additional time to gather in.
- 4.30 One of the Reporters has found this to be particularly useful in helping her come to a swift decision on whether a young person might need further action taken:

*"The teacher is there to give a quick resume of attendance and behaviour whereas I would have to request a school report, get it in writing etc and that can take up time."*  
(Interviewee E)

- 4.31 Intervening early when young people are of concern but not yet involved in serious offending is also seen to work:

*"Social workers are now intervening at a much earlier stage, a much smaller percentage of my caseload is made up of young people subject to supervision order so early interventions seems to be having an impact."*(Interviewee B)

## **Effective Intervention**

- 4.32 Intervention may be swift and early but still not be effective. However, when we observed the Group we were struck by the fact that in one case the ASB representative was able to inform the Group that a young person's mother was to be evicted the following week. Until he intervened the Group members were on the point of agreeing support for a diversionary intervention to support the young person which may have failed had he then become homeless with all the associated disruption to his life.
- 4.33 As a result of this important information regarding the eviction other measures were put in place to support the young person and his mother.
- 4.34 A key element in the work of the YPRG is that although ostensibly and primarily concerned with the young people, it is evident that there is a whole family approach to their situation. There seems to be a holistic approach not just to the working of the Group and its members, for example everyone is seen as having a contribution to make, but also to the young person and his or her family and carers.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 4.35 For example although offending behaviour may be the reason the young person has come to the Group's attention there is a recognition that the offending behaviour may not be the most serious issue:

*"We would not have looked into family background as a cause of offending before the YPRG" (Interviewee F)*

*"We can, when we are bringing everybody together...get a better picture. Quite often the issue could be a welfare issue that has to be dealt with in the first instance so often the social worker is sent back in, or the housing or the school are more the focus because we recognise that that is where the problem lies, and it is not the offending that is the problem." (Interviewee A)*

- 4.36 One of the potential benefits of the YPRG in terms of its effectiveness is that it can ensure that some young people who may previously have been referred to the Reporter and then "no further actioned" now have their cases dealt with speedily and are offered positive assistance.
- 4.37 There are also cases which seem relatively simple, but when discussed the Reporter gets much fuller detail of the circumstances of the child than she would have from a police offence referral, and so decides to take on the case further herself.
- 4.38 Some concerns were expressed by some interviewees about the balance between net widening – that is, drawing into the youth justice system young people who may only ever commit one very minor offence – and on the other hand making sure that no one "slips through the net". There was also a view that the Group, in addressing welfare concerns may be moving into territory which is rightly that of the Reporter. This was linked into some concern about the nature of confidentiality and that it may not be best practice to have such a relatively large group of people knowing about the confidential details of a young person's personal circumstances.
- 4.39 Whilst these are valid concerns there were other views expressed that lack of information, not "having the full picture" and taking at face value an apparently non-problematic situation have in the past led to children and young people being at best unsafe. The view was also put that although a lot of confidential information is shared all those on the YPRG are professionals and bound by a code of conduct not to divulge confidential information.
- 4.40 On balance, it would seem that the Group as it currently operates works efficiently in sharing as much information as is needed to gain a picture of a young person's circumstances whilst maintaining

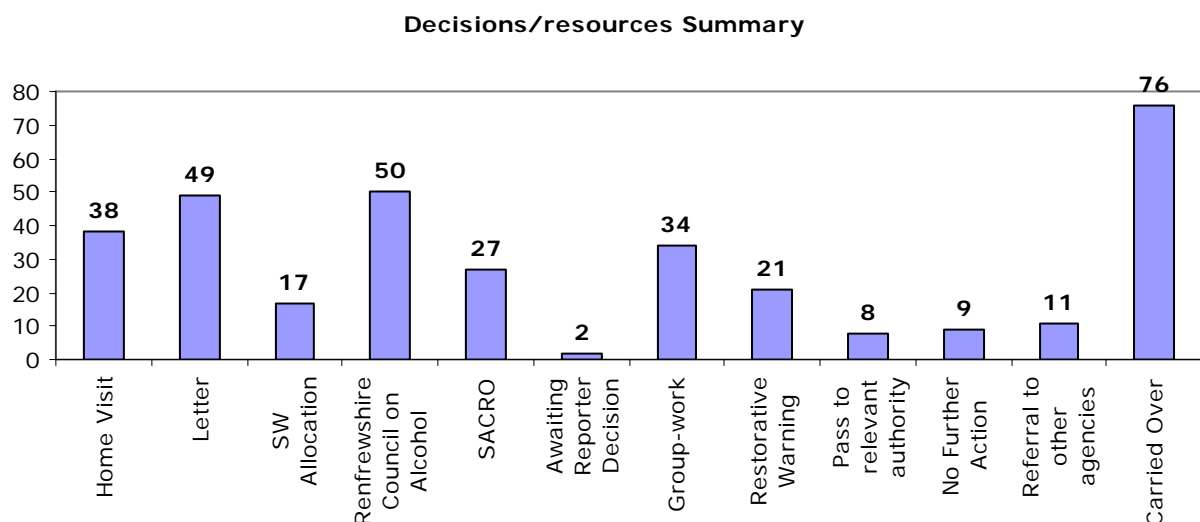
# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

a fairly light touch to dealing with young people who may simply need a warning about their behaviour in the form of a visit or letter to their family. From the notes and interviews with young people it is clear that taking into account welfare concerns is relevant to a significant number of cases and the Group does seem to be able to distinguish between the level of concern which it can effectively and appropriately deal with and when it is necessary to refer on to the Reporter or Social Work.

- 4.41 Figure 5 shows the summary of decisions and allocations made over the period September 2006 – Feb 2008. From this table it can be seen that apart from referral for support with alcohol use, the next largest number of decisions relate to a letter or home visit.

**Figure 5: Summary of Decisions and Resources**





# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

**Table 2: YPRG Aims**

YPRG Aim:	Comment
To rationalise approaches to young people exhibiting anti-social and offending behaviour across Council departments, providing a measured and comprehensive response to community and agency concerns	The Group is working well in its approaches to young people and in achieving this aim
To intervene in young people's lives with clear purpose, effectively and with the least intrusion necessary	The Group is achieving this aim
To empower young people parents/carers and community to address issues whenever possible	Young people and their parents/carers speak of the young people being more self-confident and self-aware. It is less evident that this initiative is having an empowering effect on the community. Equally it may be expecting too much of the YPRG to take on this role and may not be most relevant for this Group when there are other agencies operating in this area.

## *Improved Outcomes for Young People*

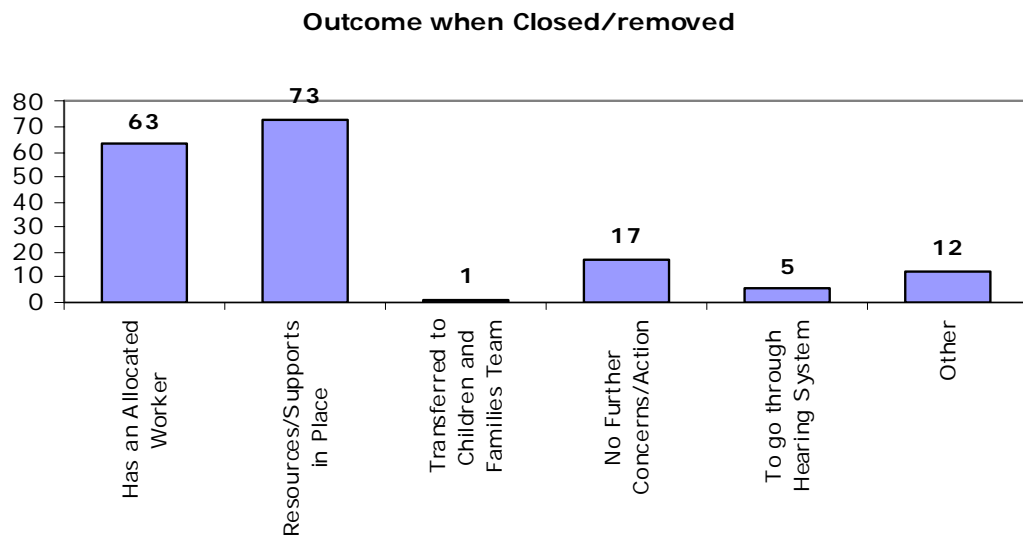
### **Quantitative Evidence**

- 4.42 The spreadsheet held by the YPRG is the primary source of quantitative data regarding outcomes for the young people who are referred to the Group.
- 4.43 The spreadsheet contains information on the outcome for the young person at the point the case is closed. The information available for the 187 cases we examined is in Figure 6.

# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research Creating Action

Figure 6: Outcome when Case Closed/Removed

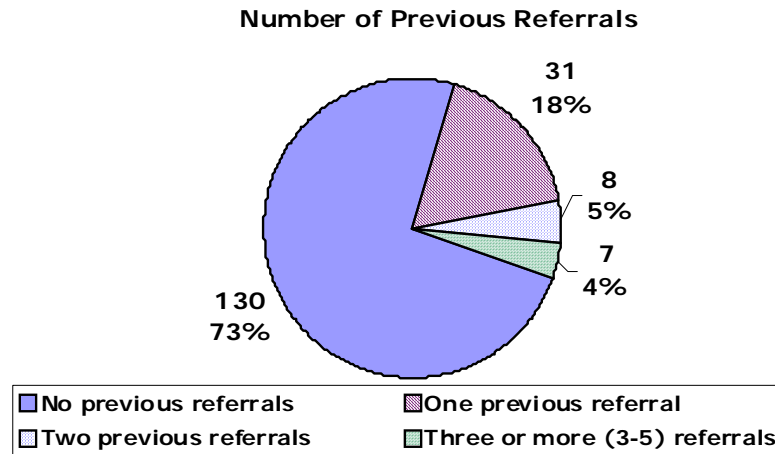


- 4.44 Definitions of what is meant by an “outcome” can be difficult and contentious. However, if we assume that outcomes are, or should be, about people and what happens to them, (which is the increasingly accepted view of the term), then outcomes in this case might be about the difference the work of the YPRG and its members has made to the young person’s offending behaviour, to the quality of his or her family life, and to the broader community.
- 4.45 Of the six options given in the above table it is our view that only one, “No Further Concerns/Action” would seem to offer the potential to be more than a short term or interim outcome for the young person in that, unlike the others, it implies that a satisfactory conclusion has been reached.
- 4.46 Another way to consider whether there have been successful outcomes for young people is to look at the re-referral rates. Re-referral rates for September 2006 to February 2008 are given in Figure 7 below. This shows that over the period only 18% of cases were re-referrals. This figure compares to the 6 month report of the YPRG, up until September 2006 where, of 47 young people studied, 18 (38%) had been further recorded in crime management figures.

# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research Creating Action

Figure 7: Number of Previous Referrals (n=176)



4.47 It is of course important to take a cautious approach to trying to assess more than short term or interim outcomes for young people, for a number of reasons:

- a) Because it is concentrating on early intervention and prevention, when the pilot started in April 2006 there were no baseline figures for the profile of young people being referred to the YPRG. (Although we do now know that in the year from September 2006 to September 2007 144 cases were dealt with by the YPRG.) The YPRG is in effect trying to act as a pre-referral screening group and therefore drawing in at least some young people who normally would not have been referred to the Reporter. By September 2008 it will be possible to have a second year figure on which to assess and compare outcomes.
- b) The Police, who make the overwhelming majority of referrals, refer all the young people who are charged to both the Reporter and the YPRG. However not all young people referred to the YPRG are charged and therefore not all are referred to the Reporter.
- c) Numbers of offence referrals to the Reporter have decreased from 212 in 2005 to 182 in 2006 and to 145 in 2007. Whilst it is not possible to categorically link this decrease in the number of offences to the work of SSPC or the YPRG alone, it may be that because the Police have the YPRG to refer to, they are intervening earlier with some young people and referring them to the Group for assistance. Prior to the YPRG, the Police may have had little alternative but to act only when the young person had committed an offence for which they could then be referred to the Reporter.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research Creating Action

- d) The pilot has only been running for two years and although the number of repeat referrals to the Group in the short term is relatively low, at 31 (18%) out of 176 cases, it is too early to know whether the outcomes for either the individuals who have been referred, or those who have not been re-referred will be positive in the longer term.
- e) It is hoped that the 74% of young people who have not been re-referred over an 18 month period will not re-offend in the longer term. For young people under 16, there is a follow up in place to track what is happening to them. The first element of this is checking to see whether or not they are re-referred to the YPRG. The Police also look at charge sheets and cross reference names with YPRG referrals, to see if young people are coming to the attention of the police again but not being referred to the group.
- f) For young people over 16 the Police would only check charge sheets and refer if the young person was under supervision. The majority of those whose case comes to the Group are 15 years old and not under supervision. The only way to follow up on these young people in the longer term would be to monitor police crime statistics for another period of, possibly two years, in order to assess longer term impact and to see whether or not these young people reappear in the adult criminal justice system.
- g) There is strong evidence from meeting minutes and from interviews that the young person's family background is a key factor in whether or not a successful outcome is achieved. Some follow up of the outcomes for the family would also be important and is something we would recommend.
- h) It is very difficult to calculate "deadweight" effect – that is what percentage of those young people who came before the Group would not have re-offended again or would have improved their behaviour without the Group's intervention.
- i) It is arguable that those young people and their families who have already been known to members of the Group over a number of years (for example 65 (37%) were already known to the Reporter) are those for whom successful outcomes provide most value for money. A successful outcome for these young people and their families may prevent various agencies spending yet more resources on them. It may be that any follow up work should focus on these young people.
- j) Because the focus of SSPC is on early intervention and prevention, it is difficult over a short timescale to measure



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

the longer term outcomes of intervening early and preventing children from developing patterns of offending or harmful behaviour. A careful baseline assessment of children at primary school age, followed up by a longitudinal study of a relatively large sample of young people would be needed in order to demonstrate the success of early intervention.

- 4.48 Taking into account all the above, ultimately the only outcomes that really matter are whether and to what extent the work of the YPRG will result in fewer young people being drawn into or continuing with offending behaviour over the longer term. In the timescale available for this evaluation it is not possible to comment on this.
- 4.49 There is some external evidence of reduction in vandalism across East Renfrewshire over the last three years. Police statistics report a fall from 1,846 incidents in 2005 to 1,563 incidents in 2007. However attributing this reduction solely to the activities of the SSPC is problematic since it is likely to have been a combination of the SSPC plus the community wardens, CCTV and police response cars which resulted in the decrease.
- 4.50 Equally whilst there has been a reduction in people being caught with offensive weapons or knives, from 122 incidences in 2005 to 96 in 2007, the number of petty assaults has gone up from 557 to 573 over that same period. These police statistics therefore present a patchy figure of progress and it is very difficult to attribute falls, or increases for that matter, to one specific initiative.
- 4.51 In terms of numbers, East Renfrewshire does not have a serious problem with persistent young offenders, with only 5 young people being described as such in the SCRA RAD figures for 2007.
- 4.52 It would seem therefore that the prevention and early intervention approach being undertaken in East Renfrewshire has had an effect on more serious young offenders and early indicators are that it would seem to be having an effect on less serious offenders.

### ***Qualitative Evidence***

- 4.53 Although quantitative evidence can be problematic, there is a substantial amount of qualitative, anecdotal and case study evidence provided by a number of the YPRG members, some of which is quoted below.
- 4.54 There is anecdotal evidence from those involved in projects such as Fire Reach, Angling for Youth Development and alcohol awareness programmes that individual young people are turning their lives around and, for example, are applying to join the Fire Service, stopping drinking to excess, applying for jobs or training courses,



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

becoming more involved in their communities, and so on. There are also some individual case studies which point to success in young people overcoming difficult and disruptive early childhoods.

- 4.55 The view of one interviewee, in comparing the situation in East Renfrewshire with elsewhere in the country was:

*"I think they are lucky to have the YPRG, and to have someone coming out and asking them can we help you in a non-punitive and non-judgemental and genuinely supportive role. I can think of quite a few people that it has delivered a positive outcome for." (Interviewee A)*

- 4.56 However, there has not been an overall collation of the numbers of young people who are now reporting that they are leading happier, safer and more productive lives as a result of the opportunities and programmes they have been offered through the YPRG and so it is not possible to say how many young people are in this situation.
- 4.57 Overall we would recommend that there is more systematic collation of the qualitative data and anecdotal evidence which exists about short term outcomes for young people, for example if it is known that they have applied to and won a college place; taken up employment; are attending regularly at school; have become peer mentors, and so on.
- 4.58 It would also be useful to set short term outcomes for families. It is suggested that criteria for short term outcomes might be developed and agreed and that these records are also kept by the administrative support for the YPRG.

### ***Evidence from the Young People and their Parents/Carers***

- 4.59 All young people and their families are notified separately, by letter, about the YPRG and given an opportunity to feed into the Group. One of the school staff we interviewed stated that he always spoke with a pupil who was listed for the YPRG and explained to him what the Group did, what he would be reporting to the YPRG about their behaviour, and what the possible outcomes would be. However, only one of the families we met with stated that they knew about the YPRG and what it did, although two others had heard the name.
- 4.60 Evidence from the young people and their parents/carers whom we interviewed is that three individuals appeared to have positive outcomes at the time of interview, in that their behaviour was under control and they were actively seeking to engage in positive activity; two young people were still involved in offending, and one young person was being referred for medical support. In one case it did seem to us that there had been difficulty in getting the right



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

balance between being persistent and trying to find suitable opportunities for the young person and taking a perhaps more measured view of when to stop and try a totally different tack.

- 4.61 For the most part the young people and their parents/carers said they had engaged well and successfully with the Young People's Support Worker and with the various opportunities they have experienced.
- 4.62 The Young People's Support Worker is a key role in relation to the YPRG and young people. She takes referrals from the YPRG and works with young people individually to identify various interventions to support them and then helps to arrange these. She also works on a one-to-one basis with young people, sometimes going with them to the Careers Office or finding information about employment or further education.
- 4.63 She also supports families if they need it, for example with housing queries or mental health issues. She can refer to appropriate agencies or take a parent to a support group. She will also accompany a young person to a Hearing if appropriate.
- 4.64 What comes through is that this worker has been persistent in listening to the young people about what they want and working with them to try different avenues to help them move forward. However in two instances there seems to have been no, or very little, impact on the ongoing behaviour or attitude of the young people.
- 4.65 Alcohol was a significant feature in all the young people's lives, as were family bereavements, family breakdown, and verbal and physical violence (this is outside the home – none of the young people spoke about parental abuse.) It is however understandable that trying to address years of difficulties in a relative short period will be a challenge and that success if it comes, will not only be gradual but may also involve ongoing and quite intensive support from professionals.
- 4.66 It is not only the Young Person's Support Worker who engages with the young people, although that is her primary role. If appropriate, a teacher, social worker, police officer, youth worker or voluntary sector worker might volunteer at the YPRG to be the key person to work with the young person at least in the first instance.

Table 3: YPRG Aim

YPRG Aim:	Comment
To reduce anti-social behaviour and youth offending, increasing community safety thereby reducing youth crime and persistent offender rates	In terms of short term outcomes, it would seem from statistics on re-referrals, from anecdotal evidence, and from reduction in referrals to the Reporter that there has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour and youth offending.

*Have youth service and youth justice resources been joined up in order to improve the effective targeting of diversionary resources?*

- 4.67 There are excellent examples of youth service and youth justice resources being joined up in order to improve the effective targeting of diversionary resources. For example, the appointment of a Youth Support Worker is a good and effective bridge between youth services and youth justice staff and the co-location of staff makes for easier working. Staff work together and with the other members of the YPRG in offering diversionary activities to young people.
- 4.68 In addition to joint working between youth services and youth justice, very importantly the SSPC model, as expressed through the work of the YPRG means that police, school, community safety, and voluntary sector resources are also being effectively joined up to ensure that the range of resources on hand are made available to young people and their families.
- 4.69 What is evident in this evaluation is that there is a significant range of resources available to organisations and to young people and their families and the establishment of the YPRG has opened up knowledge about and access to these resources for young people, their families, and the organisations concerned.
- 4.70 This has been one of the most significant factors in supporting the development of suitable provision, and therefore successful outcomes, at least in the short term, for young people. Initiatives, most of which have multi-agency involvement, include:
- Pathfinders project – targeted on young people involved in local gangs and/or in offending behaviour. This is a joint initiative with the Youth Justice Team, Community Police Officers and Community Services involving a 10 week programme followed by a weekend residential



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- Girls alcohol awareness project (12 week project) – to work with girls who may be at risk of unplanned sex or of sexual assault as a result of alcohol use
  - Diversion Group – offered by the Youth Justice Team – (5 week programme)
  - Police Restorative warnings – plus signposting to community resources or support
  - Go Country - summer outdoor based programme including activities such as, gorge walking and abseiling
  - Duke of Edinburgh Award with Police and Community Services and Social Work
  - Mobile football pitch
  - Fire Reach – Fire and Rescue Service programme offering personal and skills development
  - Angling for Youth Development
  - Prince's Trust Xcel programme in schools
- 4.71 There is a consensus across all interviewees that there have been shifts in organisational behaviour and culture as a result of the ethos and work of the YPRG and this has led more effective and efficient use of resources.
- 4.72 Many interviewees gave instances of the benefits of shared working and of people cooperating to share information, in order to ensure that they get right provision for young people:
- “The strengths (of the YPRG) are getting multi-agency round the table, collective decisions, early interventions, prevention, joined up working, sharing information, access to resources” (Interviewee A)*
- “It puts support in place more swiftly than the Hearings system can. Individuals at the YPRG can commit to an intervention” (Interviewee E)*
- 4.73 The YPRG ethos has also spread across the organisations on the Group so that now they would seem to be picking up on and intervening in instances where previously they might not have, either because they did not think this was their role, or because they did not know that anything was available to help them deal with the issue.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 4.74 From the minutes of the Group, and from the interviews, it is clear that individual professionals put themselves forward to assist with young people or offer to put them in touch with agencies or opportunities. If they had been limiting themselves to their strictly professional role they might not have seen this as “their job”.
- 4.75 This relaxing of the boundaries of one’s job in order to link in effectively with other agencies to arrive at a positive outcome for the young person is a positive indicator of good and integrated working.
- 4.76 Overall interviewees see the strengths of the YPRG approach of joint and shared working as being, variously:
- “Stops young people slipping through the net”*
- “Co-ordinated approach”*
- “Excellent inter-agency working relationships particularly with the police – less punitive approach now”*
- “SSPC model shifts some pressure away from Social Work. It’s no longer the sole agency deemed responsible for engaging with individuals in difficulty”*
- “The young person is not overwhelmed by contact with multiplicity of agencies. He or she forges relationships with one service provider who opens the door to other services – everyone is a case manager of sorts.”*
- “The individual engaging with the young person never goes in unprepared or lacking contextual information”*
- “You never need to phone anyone up and explain to them your role and remit because they already know. This level of collaboration enables maximisation of resources”*
- 4.77 There does seem to be a willingness amongst the professionals involved in the YPRG to share information and to offer their expertise in the interests of the young people involved. This is a good model of cooperative working, although it should not be under-estimated how difficult it can be to arrive at a situation where a range of different professionals from very different organisations can work well and productively together.
- 4.78 An important element in the success of the Group working as it does has been the tenacity and strength of the first Chair in ensuring that the Group would meet and function in the interests of the young people whom they were there to help. It is clear that



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

such a multi-agency group, tackling such difficult issues needs a Chair who has vision, leadership, and commitment and this seems to have been the case with the establishment and early life of the Group.

- 4.79 One area where, in our view the Group may have some further work to do, is that of the perception of the purpose of the Group and, related to this, of the nature and purpose of referrals. In theory all agencies should be able to refer young people for whom they have a concern to the Group. This is the essence of the GIRFEC approach.
- 4.80 At present referrals come overwhelmingly from the police and it would seem that this may be because different individuals and different agencies may have different perspectives of what the Group is there to do. Although the stated ethos of the SSPC and the YPRG is on early intervention and prevention it would seem that some people see it as being primarily about young people who offend. For example:
- some school based staff seem to have a view that the Joint Support Team in schools will deal with the young person so far as it can and the YPRG is then a “last resort” if all other avenues are exhausted; although others take the view that more referrals from the school to the YPRG at an earlier stage are worth considering;
  - some social workers may have a view that their assessment and plan for their young clients is, or should be, sufficient and that the YPRG is there to fill in gaps;
  - some youth workers may have the perception that if they refer young people to the Group, particularly for offending behaviour, this might impact negatively on their relationship with the young people;
- 4.81 It is suggested that the Group as a whole might wish to take some time to discuss and re-visit their perceptions and understanding of the nature and purpose of the Group so that this issue of referrals can be resolved.

***Have resources increased to address areas of need, including employment of campus police officers within school settings – and has this been effective?***

- 4.82 The resources which have gone into the YPRG are relatively small. The only new employees have been the campus police officers and the Young Person’s Support Worker. The effectiveness of and resources for campus police officers is discussed below.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 4.83 All other professional staff seem to acknowledge that attending the YPRG and taking forward the work of the SSPC is very much part of their job and is helping them to do it more effectively. For example:

*“SSPC has not so much changed our organisation’s practice as enabled it to work more effectively, in keeping with its existing ethos and principles.” (Interviewee G)*

- 4.84 Given the above, on the basis of the information available for this evaluation, there is no obvious need for any significant additional resource input for professional staff.
- 4.85 The only possible exception to this is in the area of support for young people misusing alcohol. The support previously provided by Renfrewshire Council on Alcohol is no longer available. Alcohol related offences is the largest category of offences among young people referred the YPRG and there is clearly an ongoing need for support in this area. This may be being addressed and resourced through other channels but if not, we would suggest that there is a clear need for dedicated alcohol advice and support for young people in East Renfrewshire.

YPRG Aim	Comment
To increase the effectiveness of Council responses through sharing of information, goals, resources and budgets across departments	This aim is being achieved to a significant extent. Sharing of information and goals has in the main been excellent. Although the actual resource input has been small there has been resource sharing across Community Resources and the CHCP
To encourage social workers to consider the impact that young people’s behaviour has on the community as well as on themselves and family	In interviews it was clear that this aim has been met. Both social workers and youth workers stated that they now had a better understanding of the impact of young people’s behaviour on their local community as a result of their participation in the YPRG

### *Have the SSPC and YPRG activities been integrated into the wider children and families strategic planning?*

- 4.86 The strategy for the SSPC and the YPRG is set at the Young People’s Steering Group, a sub group of the Core Children and Families Services Group which is an inter-agency group with Senior



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

Officers from Health, Education, Police, other departments in the Council, and the chairs of the sub-groups.

- 4.87 Until March 2008 the Chair of the YPRG also chaired the Young People's Steering Group. This was an important factor in ensuring that there was strategic planning and coherence when the YPRG was established.
- 4.88 The current Chair of the Young People's Steering Group is the Head of Community Resources who sits in the Chief Executive's Department and has responsibility inter alia for community and youth services and community safety. He is therefore well placed to ensure that there is continuing strategic coherence within the development of the SSPC itself, and also to ensure that there is strategic coherence and linkages with the SSPC across the work of youth workers linked in with schools, the Young Person's Support Worker, the work of community wardens and the Antisocial Behaviour Team, and the work of community learning and development in engaging with the community.
- 4.89 The Children and Families Services Core Group has a strategic commitment to integrated working and to early intervention. For example, the Early Years Sub Group has recently become the Early Intervention Group and, after a Health Visitor Review, health visitors are now to be responsible for working with vulnerable children and families from birth up to 18 years.
- 4.90 In addition, rather than having a separate Health Improvement group, health improvement is now represented in every sub group. This clearly reflects a desire to create a seamless service which can pick up and deal with issues early on.
- 4.91 The above are all good indicators of the work and the ethos of SSPC and YPRG being integrated into Children and Families at strategic level.
- 4.92 Multi-agency training was put in place when the YPRG was established to make sure that all members understood the strategic approach being taken forward. However not all members of the YPRG are sufficiently close to the strategic bodies to know about ongoing strategic developments. There have been significant developments in local and national government over the past twelve months and it would be helpful at some stage if YPRG members were to be briefed on how their work fits into the overall strategic approach of the CHCP and the Community Planning Partnership now being adopted.
- 4.93 It would be particularly helpful, probably following on from this evaluation, for the SSPC to work with the Young People's Steering



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

Group to map its future direction and strategy over the next three to five years, or whatever timescale is being worked to.

## *Have campus police officers been effective?*

- 4.94 This part of the evaluation draws on interviews with teachers in each of three high schools, Barrhead High School, St Luke's High School and Woodfarm High School; an interview with the Quality Improvement Officer, Education; interviews with the three campus police officers (CPOs); and with the Police Sergeant in the Community Safety Department responsible for the supervision of the CPOs.
- 4.95 We also held focus groups with pupils in each of the three schools.
- 4.96 The CPOs are based in Barrhead High School, Woodfarm High School, and Eastwood High School. The Barrhead HS officer also covers St Luke's HS, the Woodfarm HS officer covers St Ninian's HS, and the Eastwood HS officer covers Mearns Castle HS, Williamswood HS and the feeder primaries.
- 4.97 Strathclyde Police describe the purpose of the CPOs as:
- to perform the statutory role of protecting life and property, the prevention and detection of crime and to maintain peace in the community;
  - to effectively patrol a designated area providing an efficient response to matters arising. To identify with the community, foster and maintain close, courteous relationships;
  - to provide a quality of service at all times;
  - to undertake the duties and responsibilities of a beat constable, in respect of a defined school or schools and community area. To liaise with the local community residents, businesses, associations and other statutory agencies, report on such consultations and where necessary take appropriate action in partnership with schools and other agencies to deal with emerging issues;
  - to be actively involved in SSPC and instigate effective sharing of information between agencies. Along with partners develop local action plans with agreed outcomes that tackle and address any emerging issues either for individuals or groups;
  - to be actively involved with and oversee projects that relate to the school and young people;



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- to take an active interest in the activities of the school and a lead in developing safer school partnerships;
- to comply with Force health and safety policy and be responsible for their own health and safety applying safe working practices, which will minimise incidents of injury and ill health in the working environment;
- to have knowledge of and promote procedures and practises that comply with the Strathclyde Police equal opportunities and employment policies;
- to be fully aware of Data Protection Act/Crime and Disorder Act 1998; and
- to participate in case conferences and support the sharing of information including sensitive information to improve safety for children and young persons.

## ***Work in Schools and in the Community***

- 4.98 The CPOs participate in Joint Support Team (JST) meetings in schools. These are regular weekly or fortnightly meetings at which staff from a range of disciplines – teaching, social work, health, youth workers, and so on discuss pupils who have been identified as needing support of various kinds.
- 4.99 The input from the CPOs to these meetings is seen as extremely valuable by staff in school, youth workers, and the CPOs themselves, and the report on the CPOs (January 2008) gives some interesting case study examples which demonstrate the effectiveness of having a police officer attend these meetings.
- 4.100 The CPOs have also been involved in dealing with cyber-bullying and in some instances in dealing with fights taking place in school.
- 4.101 The CPOs see their role as about building links between the school, the pupils, and the local community. They work with youth justice social workers, youth workers, and the school Social Justice Manager on a regular basis.
- 4.102 They and the community police lead the Pathfinders Programme, a multi-agency initiative targeted on young people with a background of violent behaviour, often gang-related. They are also involved in a range of other multi-agency activities in the community such as local football matches, summer programmes, anti-sectarian marches, and litter pick ups. Angling for Youth Development is a police youth diversion programme that has been taking place in



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

Barrhead High School and has been popular with the young people involved.

- 4.103 Two of the officers are trained in restorative warnings and they have taken part in training on issues such as child protection, anti-bullying, young people and alcohol, and the Integrated Assessment Framework to enable them to contribute more fully to a shared and multi-agency way of working.
- 4.104 All the CPOs are more aware now of the positive opportunities available to young people in the community.
- 4.105 They also all find it extremely difficult to deal adequately with more than one high school and it is questionable whether, with their current duties, the system of trying to spread their work across a number of schools is really effective. What appears to be happening is that they are in effect spending the bulk of their time in the school in which they are based and the other schools are not getting an equivalent service.

### ***CPOs, the JSTs, and the YPRG***

- 4.106 The CPOs form a valuable link between the school, the community and the YPRG and can be instrumental in helping the school understand the work of the YPRG and vice versa. There was a view expressed in interviews that the JST and YPRG were in effect duplicating each other and that it might be more effective for each school to have resources to expand its JST to cover the activities of the YPRG.
- 4.107 However, other interviewees point to the fact that the SSPC approach and the YPRG are very much located in the community as well as the school and a key focus for the SSPC is to foster a more positive feeling of safety throughout the community, and a more positive view of young people in the community. These activities are clearly beyond the range of the JST.
- 4.108 A number of interviewees see that the YPRG complements the work of the JST in that staff on the Group can look across all schools in the area and can observe patterns of behaviour, gang formation, and incidents in the community and in individuals' homes and families which can then be fed back to schools to support them in their work on the JST.
- 4.109 The YPRG can pull in staff as needed from across the authority to discuss a particular case, or the youth justice social work team can check with colleagues for details relating to young people and their behaviour outside school.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 4.110 For example, the Social Justice and Communities Manager in one school reported that he found it useful to be able to pass on information gained at the YPRG, about a pupil's problematic alcohol use at the weekend to teachers who otherwise would not have known of this.
- 4.111 The housing officer and the Antisocial Behaviour officer are also key Group members in bringing information about possible evictions, re-housing and new addresses, neighbourhood disputes and so on. The Reporter also attends the YPRG and is an essential member of the Group.
- 4.112 It would not be possible or practical for each school to have either that overview, or that level of input to its JST.
- 4.113 It does seem to be the case that there is complementarity between the YPRG and the JST, and that the representatives who sit on both do support this view. However, as with the case regarding perceptions of the Group and referrals, it is suggested that the Group as a whole discuss this issue, and perhaps some head teachers might be invited to attend to share their views, and identify any areas of possible duplication, with the aim at arriving at some consensus on the way forward.
- 4.114 It is recognised that head teachers did already have a constructive meeting with the Chair of the YPRG and a senior police officer but it is our suggestion that, taking into account the work of the YPRG over the past six to nine months and recommendations in this report for the future of the SSPS, it is timely to have another meeting.
- 4.115 One non-school based member of the Group did admit:

*"Maybe we haven't been the best at clarifying the purpose of the YPRG and that it is a holistic approach to supporting young people in school and in the community and quite often in school it is more about what's going on in the school community....They do complement each other extremely well."*

### ***CPOs and the Reporter***

- 4.116 The stated criteria for police referral to the YPRG are, either when a young person has received three contact cards, (issued in cases where young people are in danger of moving into offending behaviour), or when they have committed a minor offence. CPOs and other police officers can and do also refer young people to the YPRG without referring them to the Reporter if they have concerns about their behaviour and may have been issued with one or two



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

contact cards. (The Reporter will be informed about all young people prior to coming to the YPRG and so can check in advance whether they might be already known to her.)

- 4.117 The stated criteria for police referral to the YPRG, are similar to those for cases which appear suitable for the delivery of Police Restorative Warnings. In these instances national guidelines<sup>2</sup> agreed by SCRA, ACPOS and the then Scottish Executive, state that it is possible, indeed recommended, that if a young person is charged with a minor offence the responsible police officer can ask for advice from the Reporter about whether the Reporter has welfare or other concerns which would necessitate a formal referral. If the Reporter does not have concerns and if other criteria are met, then no formal referral takes place and a Restorative Police Warning can go ahead.

*“Subject to a child meeting certain criteria, and early telephone contact having been made by the police officer in charge of the case to the local Reporter, then a police warning may be administered.....in order to contribute to the concept of speedier justice for juveniles, recorded police warnings should take place within 14 days of the offender having been cautioned and charged.”*

*Excerpt from Restorative Warnings in Scotland: Appendix 1 Protocol for Police Recorded Warning System for Juvenile Offenders (appendix 3B of Blueprint for the Processing of Children’s Hearings Cases)*

- 4.118 The important point here is that these guidelines would seem to make clear that even if a young person is charged it is not legally binding on the police officer to make a formal referral to the Reporter.
- 4.119 If a similar procedure could be developed for the YPRG then it could truly become a pre-referral screening group (as the Reporter and many other members would like to see it become) and it is possible that the current number of referrals to the Reporter on offence grounds, which are then “no further actioned”, would decrease.
- 4.120 It would still be important for the Reporter to continue to attend the YPRG because, as is the case now, information could emerge at the meeting which would alert the Reporter to the need to have a formal referral of the young person
- 4.121 Such circumstances - the Reporter deciding to take as referrals a number of “concern” cases which are currently not referred because

---

<sup>2</sup> Restorative Warnings in Scotland: Guidelines for Police: SCRA, ACPOS, Scottish Executive 2004



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

they are so minor - could of course result in an increase in the number of referrals on welfare grounds to the Reporter. This position will have to be carefully monitored.

## ***CPOs and Senior School Staff***

4.122 We interviewed one head teacher, one depute head and one Behaviour Manager. We also interviewed a Social Justice and Communities Manager. All were extremely positive about the CPOs, although in one instance the school was not receiving as much support as they would have liked because the officer could not adequately cover two schools.

4.123 The CPOs are seen as improving communication and information with regard to the young people, as offering advice to teachers - for example on drugs - diffusing tension in schools, and liaising well with parents. They are also seen as a good source of information for the teachers about what is going on in the local community, especially over weekends and holidays.

4.124 In one school the head had initially been apprehensive about her school being seen as failing because it had been assigned a CPO but she is now extremely positive about his contribution:

*"If I could rewind I would never want to share him"*  
(Interviewee H)

4.125 This head also advised that long term follow up, possibly over ten years, would be necessary to assess the impact of SSPC and the YPRG.

4.126 Overall the education staff regard the CPOs as excellent additions to the schools and are impressed by the caring and sensitive way in which they relate to both staff and pupils.

*"The biggest asset of SSPC has been the CPOs – using their soft skills – and following the ethos of ERC"* (Interviewee I)

4.127 There are also good links between the school staff and the CPOs outside school, and they work together well on community based activities such as anti-sectarian events, local radio and music events and so on.

## ***Young People and the CPOs***

4.128 The young people in the school focus groups were extremely positive about the role of the CPOs and about the individual officers involved.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research Creating Action

4.129 Some quotes included:

*"he's like a friend, he's not like a campus cop"*

*"he is funny and kind"*

*"he actually listens" and he "respects confidentiality"*

- 4.130 In Barrhead HS, the pupils thought that 95% of pupils would view the CPO favourable and that the school is much better since he came into post in terms of reduction in antisocial behaviour.
- 4.131 They thought that the remaining 5% of pupils would be influenced by their family's negative attitude towards the police. Some of the focus group found the CPO more patient and tolerant than their teachers although they noticed that he also got on well with the teaching staff.
- 4.132 The pupils identified smoking, drinking, drug abuse and gangs as the key areas of concern for them in their community.
- 4.133 Some of the girls stated that they felt bullying was now being better dealt with since the CPO arrived and they would now feel more confident that if they reported it something would happen.
- 4.134 The focus group was made up of 12 pupils from S1, S2 and S3. The results from their Feelings of Safety Gauge were that 10 had felt 'Not Very Safe' before the CPO arrived and now 11 felt 'Very Safe', and whilst only 2 felt that 'My School Was a Safe Place for Most People' before the CPO, all 12 now agree that 'My School is a Safe Place for Everyone'. (A minority of the pupils had not been at the school before the CPOs arrived so their views are based on their knowledge of the school's reputation and knowing it from siblings or friends.)
- 4.135 We also carried out a focus group with 8 pupils from S6 at St Luke's HS. This is the school covered by the CPO who is based in Barrhead High School.
- 4.136 The pupils saw drug abuse and alcohol as a problem in their local community. They spoke of tension between St Luke's HS and Barrhead HS and instanced a recent incident involving school buses.
- 4.137 Within school they identified problems of smoking, cyber-bullying and teenage pregnancy but stated that violence and fighting were "infrequent".
- 4.138 Only one pupil had met the CPO and all said they would approach a guidance teacher or other teacher if they had a problem. Their lack



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research Creating Action

of knowledge of the CPO probably reflects the fact that he cannot adequately cover both schools.

- 4.139 In completing the Feelings of Safety Gauge, these pupils thought the schools was 'Very Safe' (6) or 'Safe' (2) before the CPO arrived and was the same now. They also thought the school was a 'Safe Place for Most People' (5) and for 'Some People' (1) before the CPO and also had the same view now.
- 4.140 It would seem therefore that the presence of the CPO has not had the same impact on this school's pupils as on the Barrhead HS pupils.
- 4.141 Finally we had a focus group with 8 S2 pupils at Woodfarm HS. These pupils identified fighting in school as a problem, mainly instigated by boys in gangs. They found the CPO visible and approachable and if they knew a fight was going to happen they would let him know.
- 4.142 They also said that they would tell him if someone was carrying a knife, whereas they would not tell a teacher. This was possibly because they felt he could protect them more effectively.
- 4.143 They all said they felt safer knowing the CPO is there and comments included:
- "he's not just about behaviour – he's there for worries too"*
- "he's friendly – you can talk to him about anything"*
- 4.144 These pupils also wanted to extend the number of CPOs on the basis that:
- "If all schools had CPOs none could be picked out as a "bad school"*
- 4.145 The Feelings of Safety Gauge for Woodfarm HS only asked about their current situation since none of them had been at the school prior to the CPO coming.
- 4.146 Two pupils felt 'Very Safe' and six 'Safe' in the school, whilst 2 said 'My School is a Safe Place for Everyone', and 3 said 'My School is a Safe Place for Most People', whilst 1 said 'My School is a Safe Place for Some People'.

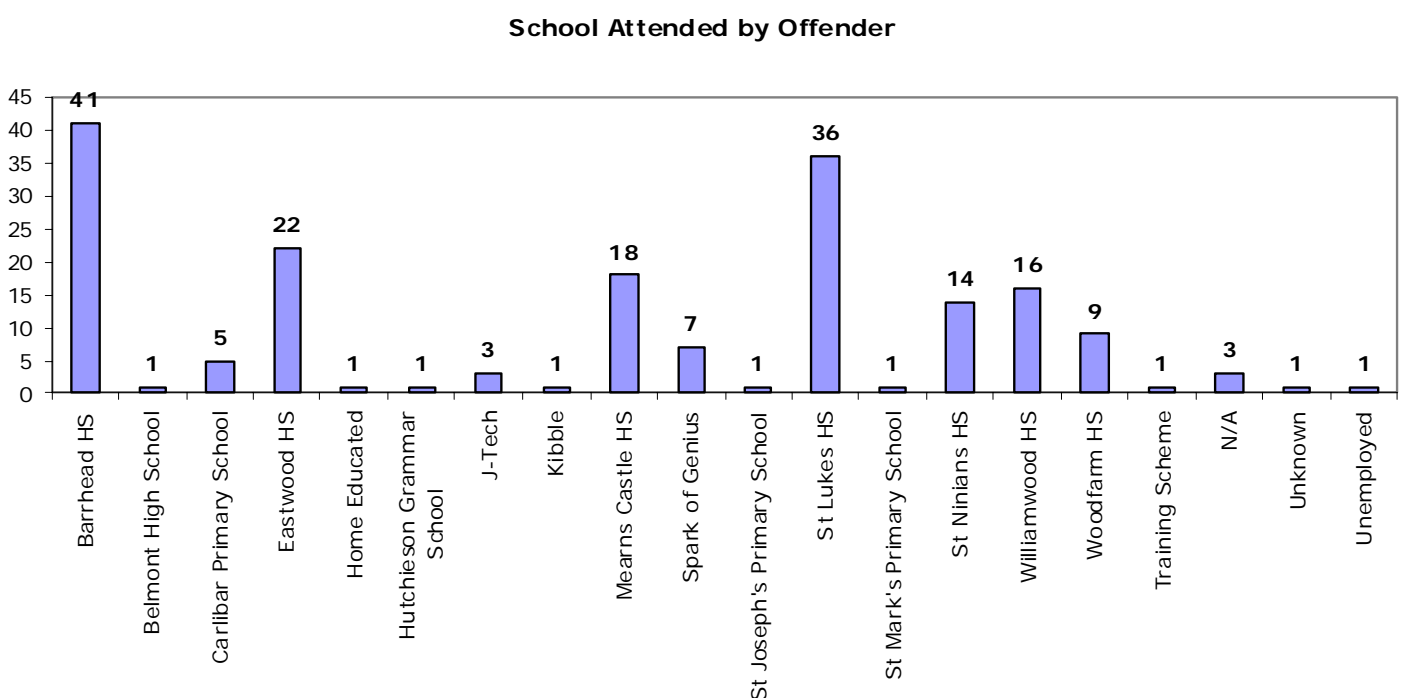
# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## Future Provision

- 4.147 The CPOS are clearly functioning extremely effectively and are making an important contribution to an integrated, preventative approach to anti social behaviour and youth offending.
- 4.148 The CPOs are continuing to be funded and there has been some suggestion that it would be helpful to expand their number.
- 4.149 It is suggested that the statistics drawn from the operating of the YPRG to date would be useful as a guide to where both current and future resources might be best targeted.
- 4.150 Figure 8 shows the schools attended by offenders, from which it is clear that Barrhead HS, St Luke's HS, Eastwood HS and Mearns Castle HS have the highest number of offenders, whilst Woodfarm HS has less than a quarter of Barrhead's. (This may of course be because Woodfarm HS has a significant number of pupils who live in Glasgow, not East Renfrewshire, and they would not come to the YPRG.)
- 4.151 Given that the CPOs are a valuable and highly trained resource it would also make best use of their skills for them to maintain a visible presence for all school pupils, but to focus on the most vulnerable and those most in need of the support the CPOs working with the other members of the YPRG can provide. This may mean that activities such as litter campaigns or road safety, could be carried out by other staff, freeing up time of the CPOs to work more intensely with the target young people and their families.

**Figure 8: School attended by Offender**



*Is there evidence of funding and other resources being directed towards services which meet identified local need? Is there value for money?*

4.152 Overall relatively little funding has been directly invested in the SSPC or the YPRG, around £160,000 per annum. The Scottish Government funding of £110,000 per year levered in another £50,000 from the local authority.

4.153 The structure of the SSPS and YPRG also meant that the professionals involved have accessed existing resources in the community to support the young people they are working with. As one interviewee said:

*“Considering the amount of individual and group work that’s delivered and the amount of choices that are given to young people, I think it is good value for money.”*

4.154 Resources have been directed towards identified need, as exemplified by the profile of the 187 cases dealt with over the eighteen months analysed.

4.155 It is of course impossible to assess how much money might have been saved on repairing damage to people or property, caused by vandalism or drunkenness, as a result of preventative measures.

4.156 In terms of the National Audit Office’s Framework for assessing value for money, it would seem that as a result of the establishment of SSPC, for most mainstream agencies there has been: economy (spending less on inputs) because they have not had to invest in additional staffing; there has been efficiency (maximum output from minimum input) in that staff are working together and sharing a workload thus inputting less and achieving more by way of output; and the SSPC and YPRG model has been effective.

4.157 Overall, in the timescale under review, the SSPC approach has achieved what it could have reasonably been expected to achieve in terms of outcomes for the young people, and in some areas, particularly that of joint working, it has been exceptional.

*To what extent does the project “fit” with partner activity and is there the ability to mainstream all or part of the SSPC project?*

4.158 The project is a good fit with partner activity. It fits strategically with the prevention and integration aims of the Children and Families Core Group, and with the move towards integrated



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

assessment; it fits with the problem solving, early intervention and violence reduction strategies of Strathclyde Police; it fits with the prevention strategy of the Fire and Rescue Service; and it fits with the Council's youth justice and community safety and anti-social behaviour strategies.

4.159 The SSPC and the YPRG are to a large extent already mainstreamed, both in the sense of now receiving mainstream funding, and in the sense that the way of working is seen as fitting with the direction in which major council departments and the CHCP and community planning partners are moving.

### *What has been the impact of the Positive Participation Project?*

3.28 East Renfrewshire Council is one of two "exemplar" areas in Scotland (the other Aberdeen) that form part of a Scottish Government initiative that examines the issue of youth participation.

3.29 The trigger for the participation work stemmed from several national mental health reports and investigations pointing to the need for greater involvement of children and young people in decision-making structures. Barnardo's, Penumbra and Children in Scotland received funding from the National Programme for Mental Health and Well-being and part of the condition of grant was that they should focus on two exemplar local council areas to establish examples of participation best practice. This is how ERC became involved with Barnardo's and Penumbra in the work.

3.30 For the Positive Participation Project, we spoke with:

- Roslyn Redpath (Chair), Depute Principal Psychologist, ERC
- Selwyn McCausland, Participation Development Co-ordinator (Barnardo's)
- Kirstie Farmer, National Development Worker (Participation) (Penumbra)
- Mark Mulhern, Community Learning and Development Manager, ERC

4.160 Wendy Harrington, the former Chair of the Project and of SSPC/YPRG also commented on the project.

4.161 Interviewees stated that the main strength of the Positive Participation Project has been the way in which it has contributed to a more joined up policy as regards youth participation and

involvement in East Renfrewshire. Decision makers are more willing to listen to young people's views and opinions.

- 4.162 There is also a good example of more effective joined up work in that particular efforts are being made to liaise with the Social Work department to ensure that opportunities are made available to children and young people accommodated away from home and those in conflict with the law.
- 4.163 The principal weakness identified by some interviewees has been what they see as a lack of action resulting from activities. In particular, the Open Space event led to the publication of the Have Your Say report but there is a view that the findings and recommendations have not been acted upon.
- 4.164 A small group of young people, from the East Renfrewshire Youth Action Group are more actively involved in decision-making now as a result of the Project. However there is little evidence to point to a positive impact on the wider youth population of East Renfrewshire.
- 4.165 Some interviewees believe that what they see as a lack of progress would seem to be linked in part to poor communications between relevant stakeholders and the absence of a participation baseline at the outset which would have enabled an assessment of impact upon children and young people. They are of the view that the media portrayal of young people remains very negative.
- 4.166 However there is another view that action has taken place to support the participation of young people, for example in terms of the establishment of the Young Persons Forum; training for young people in interacting with council officers; training for Senior Management in terms of understanding and taking into account the views of young people, and involving young people and their views in the evaluation of the SSPC.
- 4.167 These interviewees would also point to attempts to improve the image of young people, for example by showcasing the achievements of young people at the Youth Festival, and point to the fact that PR officers in East Renfrewshire Council are making efforts to improve the way young people are reported in the press;
- 4.168 Discussions have been held to progress opportunities for young people to improve their relationships with police and evidence from this research does show that relationships and attitudes between the police and young people and vice versa has changed and is more positive.
- 4.169 Given the difference of views on this project it may be that some activities in the area of consultation with young people are not seen as being part of or resulting from the Positive Participation Project



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

but more as part of the ongoing good practice which East Renfrewshire attempts to follow in its work with young people.

- 4.170 A view was expressed that although the Project was meant to be about wellbeing and mental health, because it is tied in with Youth Justice this had caused difficulties from the outset in engaging with all young people who might benefit. (Although in reality a range of young people have taken part in activities such as the consultation event and on the Action Group.)
- 4.171 It would seem however that one of the ongoing challenges for the Project is to get the broader views of young people and to get more young people's voices heard.
- 4.172 Penumbra has funded a worker to support the Project but this funding runs out in June and is unlikely to be continued. It is unknown whether the Project will continue, but it may be unlikely to do so in its present form.
- 4.173 This may be an opportunity to re-visit the direction and the dynamism of the Project and to tie it more closely in with the work of Community Learning and Development.

## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 In her paper on Police, School and Crime Prevention: A preliminary review of current practices, Margaret Shaw states:

*“Co-operation between the police and schools would appear to be particularly constructive when the police form part of a broader comprehensive programme or multi-partnership network. The third model of police-schools co-operation, involving comprehensive or multi-partnership liaison projects generally provide a strategic and integrated series of responses to safety and security issues in schools and their surrounding communities. This allow for a balancing of police expertise and contributions with that of other specialists.”*

- 5.2 Her findings fit with the findings from this evaluation, that an integrated response is the most effective and beneficial approach to dealing positively with vulnerable, damaged or difficult young people. Shared aims, practice, and ethos are at the core of what is making the SSPC approach and the YPRG operate successfully.

### Fit with National Policy Areas

- 5.3 There are a number of issues of national policy interest which are relevant to the SSPC, including:
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
  - Integrated Assessment Framework
  - National Youth Justice Standards
  - National Antisocial Behaviour strategy
  - National Outcomes

### **GIRFEC**

- 5.4 This evaluation has found that the YPRG model is an excellent example of the GIRFEC approach in practice, that is all agencies taking responsibility for ensuring that children and young people are safe, respected, cared for, and so on, with professionals working together effectively to arrive at a solution which meets the needs of the child or young person.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 5.5 The children and young people are put at the centre of the approach, and individuals on the YPRG go beyond their strict remit to offer help and assistance where appropriate. It is a key strength of the Group, and exemplary practice, that the members do not say “that’s not my remit”. If something needs done and they are in a position to do it then they do so.
- 5.6 The SSPC approach also fits with the broader services to young people and families approach – particularly in the early years - which is focused on developing soft skills, communication skills, and emotional and physical resilience in parents, children, and young people. Linking thinking on youth justice with knowledge of how families work, and how they can be supported to work better, in the same way that child protection does, would strengthen a truly integrated approach to supporting all vulnerable families and children.

## *Integrated Assessment Framework*

- 5.7 The approach adopted by SSPC and the YPRG actively encourages and enables integrated assessment of young people and it could be anticipated that introducing an integrated assessment approach formally into the work of the Group would not be problematic, once systems and training are in place.

## *National Youth Justice Standards*

- 5.8 The SSPC and YPRG model fits with the relevant standards for the quality of the youth justice process; it fits with the standards for the range and availability of programmes; it circumvents and speeds up many of the time standards for reaching a decision for the young offender; and it contributes to meeting the standards for the area’s Youth Justice Strategy Team for ERC, that is the Young People’s Reference Group.

## *Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy*

- 5.9 In its current review of antisocial behaviour strategy, the Scottish Government has stated its desire to place additional focus on prevention and early intervention at a national level. The review is seeking to identify where agencies are engaged in prevention and early intervention activities. SSPC and the YPRG would be a useful and interesting model for the Government to consider.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

## *National Outcomes*

- 5.10 The Government's national outcome which is most relevant to the work of the SSPC and YPRG is Outcome 8: We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

## *Recommendations*

- 5.11 The recommendations which follow are drawn from within the report and there is a final one which relates to the potential for rolling out the model to other community planning partnership areas.

## *Reporting and Recording Systems*

- 5.12 Overall, administrative support and reporting and recording systems are good. However we recommend the development of a database to hold the information. This would enable a range of useful cross-tabulated reports to be produced which could give an overall picture of offending analysed by a number of variables, and would help with planning and with performance management. It may be that the development of the new Care First Six database by the CHCP could offer the additional functionality needed.
- 5.13 We would also suggest that, given the impact of family background and circumstances on the behaviour of the young person, it would be useful to have some specific data fields on family circumstances included in the YPRG database.

## *Empowerment of Young People, Parents/Carers and Community*

- 5.14 We recommend that efforts should continue to be made to empower young people and their parents and carers. We think that it is overstressing the resources and remit of the SSPC and YPRG to have as a key aim seeking to empower the community, although the members of the Group should contribute where possible to activity being led by others such as community learning and youth services.

## *Improved Outcomes for Young People*

- 5.15 We recommend, as a preventative measure, targeting resources on the transition from primary to secondary education, and in the first term of first year at high school.



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research Creating Action

- 5.16 Since the majority of young people whose case comes to the Group are 15 years old we recommend that in order to follow up in the longer term police crime statistics are monitored for two years after the case is closed, in order to assess longer term impact.
- 5.17 Since single birth mothers are the most common family type referred to the Reporter, and since 47% of children referred live in single parent households it is recommended that a particular focus is put on these households.
- 5.18 In particular, we recommend that follow up should focus on those young people who were already known to the Reporter when they come to the YPRG.
- 5.19 We also recommend that the Group carry out some Critical Intervention Analysis of past cases, looking over the history of when the young person first became known to any agency as a cause of concern, identifying what might have improved their situation at an earlier point, and seeing what lessons can be learned now about how to make intervention more successful when young people first come to the attention of the care or youth justice system.
- 5.20 We recommend more systematic collation of the qualitative data and the anecdotal evidence which exists about short term outcomes for young people.
- 5.21 We recommend setting criteria for short term outcomes for families and that these records are also kept by the administrative support for the YPRG.
- 5.22 We also recommend some longer term follow up of the outcomes for the family. This is particularly relevant where there are younger siblings.
- 5.23 In terms of very early intervention and its preventative potential, we suggest that consideration be given to a longitudinal study of primary school children. Taking the indicators of risk set out in the "Planning Framework: Prevention and Reduction of Violence – Working with Young People", produced by Wendy Harrington, we suggest using the Integrated Assessment Framework as a tool to identify young people, possibly in Primary 5, in two schools – one in Barrhead and one in Eastwood – who might be assessed as likely to be involved in offending behaviour.
- 5.24 We suggest the YPRG members, in particular but not only the CPOs, then work intensively with these families to support them to support their children to achieve their full potential. If such an initiative were evaluated over a three to four period it may be



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

possible to assess whether the early intervention approach was effective in preventing offending behaviour.

## *Referrals*

- 5.25 We suggest that the Group takes time to discuss and re-visit their perceptions and understanding of the nature and purpose of the Group so that this issue of referrals can be resolved.

## *Strategic Integration*

- 5.26 We suggest the SSPC work with the Young People's Steering Group to map its future direction and strategy over the next three to five years, or whatever timescale is being worked to.

## *A Pre-referral Screening Group*

- 5.27 We recommend adopting a similar procedure to that of the existing guidelines on police restorative warnings so that the YPRG could become a pre-referral screening group
- 5.28 We suggest it would still be important for the Reporter to attend the YPRG.

## *Campus Police Officers*

- 5.29 We suggest using the statistics drawn from the operating of the YPRG to date as a guide to where both current and future resources might be best targeted. This may mean re-allocating CPOs to different schools, or re-allocating the time they spend in specific schools.
- 5.30 We recommend that the CPOs continue to maintain their visible and positive presence for all school pupils, but focus on the most vulnerable young people and those most in need of the support which the CPOs, working with the other members of the YPRG, can provide.
- 5.31 We suggest that other activities such as litter campaigns or road safety, or drug awareness lessons, could be carried out by other staff, freeing up time of the CPOs to work more intensely with the target young people and their families.
- 5.32 Although based in schools, it is the strength of the CPOs in linking the school to the community, and to social work and the other agencies involved in the YPRG which is key to the success of this



# Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

project. They should continue to be based in schools but, as now, not “belong” to the school.

## Rolling Out the Model

5.33 We suggest that if the model, or elements of the model, are to be rolled out to other community planning partnerships or local authorities the following criteria would need to be met for it to operate successfully:

- The local authority and community planning partnership need to have well-established joint working practices and cultures across all community planning partners, or be prepared to invest heavily in time and resources in bringing this about.
- Since the level of joint working which exists in East Renfrewshire is in our view unusually high, this probably means that some community planning partnership areas might need a considerable lead time before introducing the model.
- There needs to be commitment from top management and politicians to making the model work.
- There needs to be a senior and strong Chair who is willing to take risks and show leadership.
- There must be evidenced commitment to working towards a real integrated approach across all agencies, including police, education, social work, health, Reporter, youth services and so on.
- There must be strategies in place to overcome challenges thrown up by introducing cultural change into organisations.
- There must be a willingness on the part of officers in the public and voluntary sectors to work differently in order to achieve the best outcomes for young people. This may mean that in some areas staff development is needed about how to work differently.

## The Next Steps and Future Evaluation

5.34 The SSPC is a developmental approach. This evaluation has focused on examining that approach, and its operation in practice through the work of the YPRG. The tools we developed for the evaluation are contained in the Technical Appendix and can be re-used at a later date, to compare this baseline report against future progress.



## Blake Stevenson

Creative Research **Creating** Action

- 5.35 We suggest that the key players in the SSPC might usefully consider how to take forward the recommendations in this report and discuss their views and suggestions for implementation with the Young People's Steering Group.
- 5.36 We have not evaluated specific projects, such as the Pathfinders project, but individual project evaluation may be an area for the SSPC to consider in the future.