

Cheshire YJS – Social Prescribing Programme

[keywords: *young people, mental health, wellbeing*]

Overview

Most of the children referred to Cheshire YJS at the point of arrest have previously unmet health, psychosocial, and neurodevelopmental needs. While the introduction of child and adolescent specialists in mental health, speech and language therapy, and substance misuse, has helped, many young people are reluctant to engage in overtly ‘clinical therapies’. As a result we have developed a complementary, social prescribing approach, in partnership with local, community-rooted organisations. Participants can engage in a range of positive mindfulness activities, from fitness training to fishing and song-writing, to help address their needs, under the supervision of adults from outside the CJS – some of whom bring their own lived experience to the role – who are able to connect with the young people less formally, and provide a positive role-model to them.

Its impact

We have seen significant, often dramatic, improvements in the wellbeing of the young people involved, as well as greater engagement with more traditional services, and improved compliance with their court orders.

What’s special about it

We believe this is an innovative and highly effective way of engaging and helping address the unmet health needs of this group, as well as ultimately helping to reduce their risk of reoffending in the future.

Wider applicability

While it does require modest funding, it is a relatively inexpensive approach which could be adopted elsewhere, and we have already seen a number of other areas starting to develop similar approaches.

Further information

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See also: [YJB Resource Hub entry](#)