

Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Service Mapping Project

London Offender Health Partnership Board
Executive Summary

April 2010



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objectives of the Report

The London Offender Health Partnership Board (LOHPB) commissioned this study to develop a comprehensive understanding of Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion (CJLD) services operating across London and identify gaps to enable their future development. Achieving these improvements will require intensive activity to undertake the necessary actions and deliver the recommendations of the Bradley Report and the Improving Health, Supporting Justice Delivery Plan.

Following the completion of this study, a strategic conversation involving key stakeholder organisations is required to identify the next steps to take forward its recommendations on a pan-London basis. These discussions must include the key relevant agencies, focus on the scope of this initiative and determine where recommended proposals should be located within strategic structures. In addition, while highlighting the potential efficiency gains associated with implementing the recommendations made, it was not within the scope of this report to deliver cost-benefit and operational analysis. Therefore additional work is required to provide quantitative evidence of the financial and efficiency gains.

This project is one of a number of workstreams currently being delivered to inform the development of future commissioning guidance for London. The report provides a baseline of current provision, identifies gaps, and highlights aspirations for the future development of CJLD services in London.

Research Approach

The study was informed by a number of intelligence gathering activities, specifically:

- Literature Review – a comprehensive analysis of existing research, strategy and policy related to mental health, learning disability and offending was undertaken.
- Online Survey of CJLD Services and Court Stakeholders – this formed the basis for a full mapping exercise of London's existing CJLD service provision and a survey of stakeholders working in courts across the London Region.
- Focus Groups – a total of twelve focus groups, attended by over 120 participants, were facilitated in Crown and Magistrates Courts.

Areas for Consideration

The findings from this study have been divided into a number of key areas for consideration by LOHPB and its regional partners.

Earlier Identification and Intervention

This study has identified the need and value of introducing screening and diversion of offenders with mental health problems and/or learning disabilities at the earliest possible stage of the offender pathway. This offers potential for efficiency gains and further cost-benefit analysis is required to provide evidence for this, but it could be delivered by:

- Increasing the role of the partnerships with the Police in early screening and intervention to facilitate closer links with Community and Public Health services.
- Finalising and expanding the development of a Screening and Assessment Tool in Police custody. This would need to be developed to include learning disabilities.
- Maximising the role of the 200 nurses to be recruited by the MPS through *Project Herald* to work in custody suites across London. This must consider the extent to which these nurses will have the knowledge, capacity and training to consider the wider Health Offender Agenda, including mental health and learning disabilities.
- Increasing the numbers of CJLD services serving individual police stations, or clusters of police stations, according to demonstrable demand.
- Ensuring consistency with other screening tools being delivered at later stages in the offender pathway as CJLD schemes must be integrated with the range of additional offender needs, for example substance misuse covered by DIPs (Appendix C).

Local / Sub-regional Single Point of Contact

The research has identified the need for a local or sub-regional single point of contact for existing CJLD schemes and stakeholder organisations involved in supporting offenders with mental health problems and/or learning disabilities. This could be delivered by:

- Using individuals, or clusters of CJLD services, to provide wraparound service provision in relation to mental health, learning disability and the Criminal Justice System.
- Introducing a localised case management approach to CJLD services to facilitate improved information sharing at a local level by managing an individual through screening, assessment, court appearance and post-disposal.

Service User Involvement

The study identified the need to understand, and respond to, the first-hand experience of service users within the Criminal Justice System. Consultations highlighted the need for enhanced explanation of the criminal justice process and improved communication of information; the need for available emotional support at police stations and court; and the potential for service users to be involved in training and awareness raising for practitioners.

Victims and witnesses

The study has indicated that the needs of victims and witnesses are currently too frequently overlooked and that it is the responsibility of the CPS and Witness Support Service to ensure that they are met. Research highlighted the value in increasing linkages between CJLD schemes and these agencies so that CJLD can act as a forum or a signposting mechanism to meet their needs.

Phased Approach to Change

The research indicated that a phased approach to change and service composition is necessary to ensure a seamless transition between strategic and operational systems. This would also allow for the necessary culture change amongst frontline practitioners which may be required to drive success.

Learning Disability Services

The consultation programme has indicated that learning disability services are less well-developed than those supporting offenders with mental health problems. The development of enhanced services must be a core future consideration to meet the needs of this disadvantaged group and should be fully integrated within CJLD provision.

CJLD Services

The research has identified clear demand for CJLD provision; however, current services have limited staffing resources and variable budgets. In addition, success too often depends on individuals' commitment and personal contacts rather than a co-ordinated and structured delivery framework. Commissioning CJLD services is the optimal public policy tool to expand support to offenders with mental health problems and/or learning disabilities and can also play a significant role in addressing other factors that affect an individual's offending behaviour through the provision of an integrated service meeting a variety of needs. This could include the development of a service specification considering: location; standardised service provision; long-term funding; staffing and resources to meet local demand; and consistent management and governance arrangements.

Psychiatric Reports

The study has clearly indicated that psychiatric reports should be fit for purpose and produced in a timely and consistent fashion. A number of issues have been identified which should inform the development of any future Service Level Agreement regarding the commissioning of psychiatric reports, including the need for a clear framework or template to improve their quality and ensure a standard structure, length and cost.

Information Sharing

The research has identified a lack of horizontal information sharing across the offender pathway. This presents clear blockages to the efficient delivery of the justice system for this target group and has a range of implications for both the offender and the system. If addressed, this can reduce duplication, costs and inefficiency in the system significantly. This issue should be addressed through a localised central point of contact to facilitate the more effective sharing of information between agencies.

Awareness Raising

The research has highlighted a lack of knowledge and awareness across the Criminal Justice System of mental health and learning disability, the interventions and services that are available to address it, and its impact on offending behaviours. A need has been identified for multi-agency awareness raising provision, which will in tandem generate improved partnership working. For example, the Police and Probation Services should develop stronger links with community and voluntary sector service providers to enable signposting to occur.

Training Provision

The difference between training and awareness raising for criminal justice practitioners in relation to mental health and learning disabilities has been highlighted. Generic awareness raising is required for all stakeholders; however, training requirements vary considerably and need to be tailored to the specific technical demands of an individual's role and responsibility within the system. The methods used to deliver appropriate training will require careful consideration.

Increased use of the Third Sector

The LOHPB should consider using the policy levers within Strategic Commissioning to raise the standard of provider provision and encourage partnership delivery between the statutory and Third Sector, particularly BME Third Sector groups.