

# Operation Deter evaluation

## Background information – September 2023

### Overview of over 18 process

For those over 18, Operation Deter aims to make better use of charging and remanding offenders to court who are found in possession of a knife and is now a force wide initiative. This approach does not require a change in the law, but a change in approach from Thames Valley Police (TVP), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the courts.

The approach is centred around a zero-tolerance approach to knife possession offences with the objective that such offences are proactively charged and remanded to court by TVP while the suspect is still in Custody. Following the charge, the Custody sergeant will then take a more robust approach to bail.

Where a suspect returns on bail, following a full code charging decision being made for a knife offence, the Custody sergeant will robustly review further bail being granted. As the charging decision has already been made, the decision on whether or not to grant bail sits with TVP rather than the CPS.

Expedited case progression for these offences will reduce the time between offence, charge and court resolution which should expedite delivery of the criminal justice interventions aimed at reducing re-offending including custodial sentence. This will in turn reduce the risk caused by the suspect continuing to possess a knife.

### Overview of under 18 process

The Act NOW pathway for under 18s is delivered by the YOT in Milton Keynes and by Slough Children First's Exploitation and Youth Justice Service (EYJS) Slough. The core hours of operation for the pathway are between 9am and 10pm, 7 days per week, in both areas.

When a young person is arrested for an eligible offence during core hours, a phone call is made by custody staff to the Milton Keynes YOT/Slough EYJS. This call is then triaged and allocated to a YOT worker who will complete background checks on the young person and attend custody within 90 minutes. Where a young person is arrested outside of core hours, the visit will be carried out by the YOT worker as soon as practicable.

On arrival at custody, the YOT worker will meet with the Appropriate Adult where possible and with the young person to encourage them to engage with the pathway and complete a basic screening tool. After the initial visit in custody, a follow up home visit will be undertaken within 48 hours. The young person will be given 10 days to decide whether they would like to engage with Act NOW.

If the young person does agree to engage, speech and language assessments will be completed and any further policies and procedures for Out of Court Disposals will be followed. Young people will be given every opportunity to engage with the programme, but should they fail to do so, or if their offending is particularly dangerous, the criminal justice route will remain the proper course of action.

A flowchart, providing further detail on the Act NOW process, can be found in Appendix B.

### Key performance indicators being measured

#### *Over 18 pathway*

- Increase in robust charging decisions (those who are charged and remanded within custody);
- Increased confidence in decisions that result in bail or No Further Action;
- Decrease in volume of offences resulting in Release Under Investigation or caution;
- Increased use of severing knife crime offences;
- Increased confidence in decisions made by partner agencies such as CPS, defence and courts;
- Decrease in time between the arrest and final outcome;

#### *Under 18 pathway\**

- Increase of 35 in young people referred into the pathway (baseline zero as new provision and based on an average of data from the past 4 years);
- Increase of 28 young people that engage with the pathway (baseline zero as new provision and with an 80% engagement rate);
- Increase of 28 parents/carers engaging (baseline zero as new provision and with an 80% engagement rate);
- Accurate data capture of demographics and needs to enable analysis and comparison against the total YOT cohort;
- No more than 30% of young people flagged for subsequent offences after engaging with the pathway (baseline zero as new provision);
- Young people's positive engagement will be reflected in a written report and feedback that can be shared with the courts as appropriate to inform CJ outcomes;
- At least half of young people engaged will report in their self-assessment that the pilot has supported their individual needs;
- At least half of young people engaged articulate awareness of other avenues of support available to them;
- Increased understanding of what agencies are doing, how they are doing it and the evidence that exists on what works measured through an increase in partner agencies participating in the Operation Deter Project Board and increase in the number of new referral routes for young people;
- 80% increase in onward referrals to other agencies to support young people (baseline zero as new provision);

\*to note, the figures contained within these KPIs are specific to Slough EYJS and Home Office reporting under the Homicide Prevention Fund.

#### *Stakeholder involvement*

Success delivery of Operation Deter requires close partnership working with a range of internal Thames Valley Police departments (such as Criminal Justice and Local Policing) and external stakeholders including the CPS, His Majesties Courts and Tribunals Service and local authority YOTs. There is an established Project Board, chaired by the TVP lead for Operation Deter, which takes place on a bi-monthly basis to maintain strategic engagement with key stakeholders, as well as providing the governance structure to monitor delivery progress and outcomes.

#### Demand and outputs

##### *Over 18 Operation Deter pathway – Thames Valley*

Between 01 July 2022 and 26 June 2023:

- There were 694 over 18s arrested for eligible offences and who entered the Operation Deter pathway across the Thames Valley.

- Of these, 248 individuals have been charged and remanded in custody by TVP with 93 individuals subsequently sent straight to prison and 36 receiving court outcomes (15 receiving a suspended sentence, 8 receiving a community order, 5 receiving custodial sentences, 5 receiving fines, 2 receiving conditional discharges, 1 receiving a drug rehabilitation order) and a further 229 awaiting outcomes.

*Under 18 Act NOW pathway – Milton Keynes*

Between 03 January and 21 June 2023:

- There were 52 arrest incidents for under 18s under Act NOW in Milton Keynes (with repeated arrests for more than 1 young person).
- The Milton Keynes YOT responded to 38 arrest incidents (some of which were on more than one occasion for the same child) and were notified retrospectively of a further 10 young people post-release from custody.
- A further 4 young people were visited in custody under Act NOW but were resident outside of Milton Keynes and so were not offered longer-term intervention. In these cases, the relevant local authorities were made aware of the arrest.
- During this time period there were 23 Act NOW cases open to the Milton Keynes YOT, with 3 young people having partially completed the intervention and 7 young people having successfully completed the full intervention.

*Under 18 Act Now pathway - Slough*

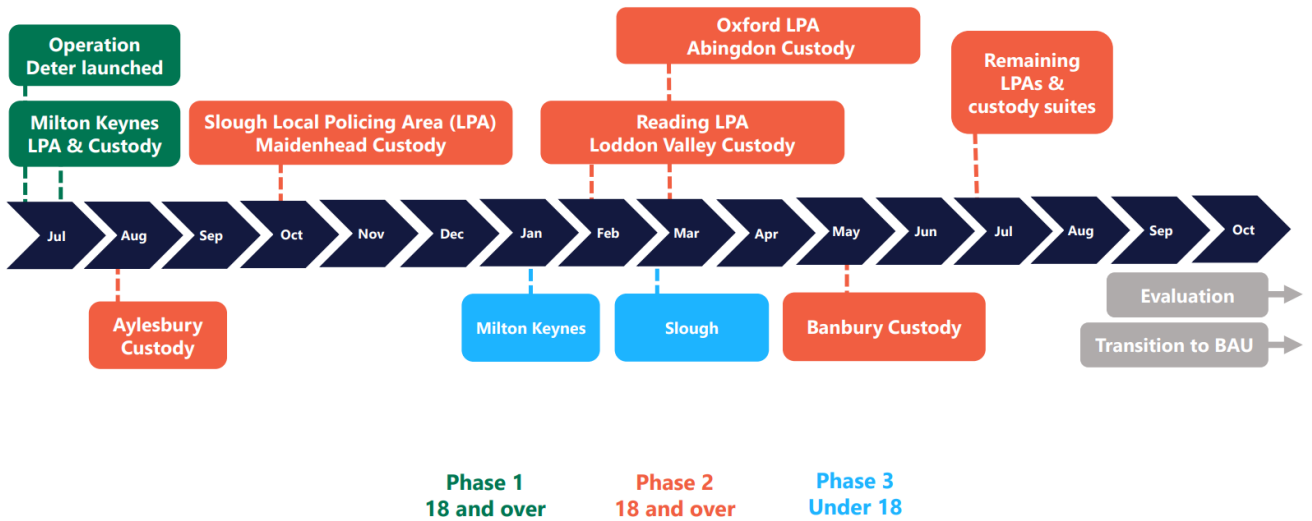
Between 01 March and 30 June 2023:

- There were 13 referrals for under 18s made to the EYJS in Slough.
- The Slough EJYS responded to 5 young people within 90-minutes and were notified of a further 7 young people post-release from custody.
- Of the 13 referrals, 5 young people were not offered longer-term intervention as they were resident outside of Slough, but a referral was made to the relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- During this time period there were 7 young people engaging with the Act NOW pathway.

# Appendix A

LPA = Local Policing Area

## OPERATION DETER TIMELINES



## Appendix B

### Act NOW process followed by Slough EYJS

