

Institution: Aberystwyth University		
Unit of Assessment: 4: Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience		
Title of case study: Implementing a risk-based approach to deliver interventions for young people at risk of anti-social behaviour and serious and organised crime		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014-2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Gareth Norris	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 1 October 2010- present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: April 2016 – ongoing		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? Y/N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Working collaboratively with the Ceredigion Youth Justice and Prevention Services (CYJPS), Dr Norris developed a bespoke risk assessment tool (CYSTEM) which changed the practice of assessment for young people referred across the four Dyfed-Powys Youth Offending Teams. CYSTEM enabled the diversion of over a third of low-risk offenders from formal criminal justice involvement; and for resources to be targeted at higher risk individuals who were most likely to benefit from targeted interventions. Alongside the impact on individual local stakeholders, the expertise generated informed policy for the Youth Justice Service (YJS), Police, Youth Justice Board (YJB), and the Home Office both in the UK and overseas.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>An analysis of the declining crime rates since 2005 by Griffith and Norris [3.1], identified that an overall reduction in the number of offenders over the 2005 to 2015 period is closely linked to a significant reduction (45%) in the proportion of the youth population that offends in any given year. In addition, the number of youth offenders appeared to have contributed to a 'knock on' effect on the number of adults offending in subsequent years. In essence, this is the outcome of young people not offending [when young], who subsequently did not go on to offend as adults. This analysis highlighted the importance of various policy initiatives designed to address youth crime and anti-social behaviour, such as the National Strategy for the Policing of Children and Young People and a move towards welfare-based approaches for lower-level youth offending.</p> <p>To this end, through a funded collaboration with Ceredigion Youth Justice Practice Services (CYJPS) [3.6], a risk assessment tool - the Ceredigion Youth Screening Tool (CYSTEM) - was designed and implemented in 2016, to take a pragmatic approach to the diversion of young people out of the formal Youth Justice system.</p> <p>This screening tool addresses the two linked factors of risk of offending (ROF) and risk of vulnerability (ROV). It is a <i>pre-screen</i> tool to reduce both the administrative burden and the potential for stigmatisation of the young people being referred ('Child First' approach) to the Youth Justice system. The tool was initially informed largely by reference to existing practice inventories (predominantly ASSET), but with significant input from case managers and senior assessment staff. CYSTEM assesses six core facets identified as predictors of later offending: ROF: Criminal/ antisocial thoughts; Criminal/ antisocial environment; Criminal/ antisocial behaviour; ROV: Looked after child/ child in need/ social service/ disability; Living with perpetrator of DV and/ or sexual exploitation; Reckless/ harmful behaviour (inc. sexual). The presence of one of these features during screening necessitates a formal ASSET assessment; for those identified as very low risk (i.e., not scoring on any of the key indicators), then no formal</p>		

intervention is enacted. Sensitivity analysis (AUC) indicated that there was a moderate level of predictive capacity in being able to identify the likely future offenders from the non-offenders. In this domain, the screening tool showed comparable discriminant validity as similar tools. [3.2]

Following the development of CYSTEM, the Home Office funded two phases of targeted intervention with CYJPS with Norris as programme evaluator- SOC-1 and SOC-2 [3.7]. The Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model- a process well established in the correctional literature, that advocates the allocation of individuals to appropriate interventions based on their individual circumstances and requirements- demonstrates that medium to high-risk offenders, are significantly more responsive to high quality intervention work, than most low-risk offenders [3.3]. Utilising the CYSTEM tool, cohorts of high-risk young offenders were identified as suitable referrals to undertake a range of interventions designed to address issues of vulnerability to exploitation and Serious and Organized Crime (SOC) activities, including sexual exploitation and drug supply networks, 'County Lines'. The interventions consisted of 6 weeks of structured activities that covered topics including web safety, mood and emotions, and substance misuse. The impact of these interventions was measured through a decrease in offending frequency, intensity and reduction in risk profiles, alongside psychological indices including well-being and resilience [3.4; 3.5].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1 Griffith, G., Norris, G. (2019), Explaining the crime drop: contributions to declining crime rates from youth cohorts since 2005, *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 73: pp. 25–53. DOI: [10.1007/s10611-019-09846-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-019-09846-5)
- 3.2 Norris, G., Griffith, G., West, M. (2018), Validation of Ceredigion Youth Screening Tool (CYSTEM), *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62(12): pp. 3727-3745. DOI: [10.1177/0306624X17752299](https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X17752299)
- 3.3 Norris, G., Griffith, G., Norris, H. N. (2017), Risk Assessment in Youth Justice: A Child-Centered Approach to Managing Interventions, in Petherick, W., & Sinnamon, G. (eds.), *The Psychology of Criminal and Antisocial Behavior: Victim and Offender Perspectives*, (London: Elsevier: Academic Press): pp. 211-229.
- 3.4 Norris, G., *Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Intervention – Phase 1. Ceredigion Youth Justice and Prevention Service and the Home Office*, May 2018, (Aberystwyth University).
- 3.5 Norris, G., *Ceredigion SOC Evaluation: Summary report of the Ceredigion Serious and Organised Crime Intervention – Phase 2*, July 2019, (Aberystwyth University).

Associated funding

- 3.6 Development of a risk assessment tool: The Youth Justice Board: (15 April 2014 - 31 March 2015): Award: GBP8,000.00. Norris (PI).
- 3.7 Evaluation of serious and organised crime intervention: Home Office: (1 September 2018 - 31 May 2019): Award: GBP10,219.53. Norris (PI).
 - Phase 1: 22 young people aged (14-17): total project funding GBP19,500.
 - Phase 2: 30 young people aged (10-12): total project funding GBP34,500.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

CYSTEM, has been used by CYJPS since April 2016. Following directives from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Dyfed-Powys, from April 2018, the screening tool was further adopted for use with all referrals to the Youth Justice Service (YJS) across the Dyfed-Powys force area - Pembrokeshire, Carmarthen, Powys and Ceredigion [5.1; 5.2] - to ensure: a) a valid screening process for referrals as identified through HM Probation Youth Offending Team (YOT) inspections, and b) a standardised force-wide process to facilitate data sharing and research.

The risk-assessment tool informs decision making on the most appropriate level of involvement following referrals to the YJS and is able to screen out approximately 35% of the entire case load referred to CYJPS, depending on whether an individual is identified as either a low-risk, or high-risk young offender [5.3; 3.2].

The key beneficiaries are threefold. Firstly, adopting a 'Child First' approach has been applied towards **Young People in Ceredigion and Dyfed-Powys** reducing the stigmatisation/ labelling of the young people referred to the service; this further reduces the chances of later offending for these low-risk offenders. The number of referrals in Ceredigion was reduced by approximately 30% in terms of total case load. The Head of CYJPS confirms:

The development of the Ceredigion Youth Screening Tool (CYSTEM) has been a major driver of change in the way in which we assess and process young people referred to the service.

CYSTEM has allowed us to focus resources on the most critical individuals and avoid stigmatizing the very low risk cases; figures show that this has had an impact on the number of young people re-entering the system over the past two years. [5.1]

Secondly, **staff working in Youth Justice** saved time and financial resources, which enabled more efficient allocation of intervention work such as group work, sports-based interventions, one-to-one supervision, and substance misuse programmes. Using CYSTEM for a third of cases saves between three and five hours per referral and between approximately 150 and 200 hours per year, per caseworker. Not having to formally assess very low risk young offenders has significantly reduced demand for resources and freed up case workers' time to provide intervention work with the high-risk category. The Head of CYJPS confirms:

The tool has changed the practices of referrals by screening out low risk individuals and has since been adopted across the four Dyfed-Powys force areas. Beyond the benefits realized by the young people, CYSTEM has saved hundreds of hours in staff time and released vital resources for important work in the community. [5.1]

Thirdly, the **wider public benefited through crime reduction**, by enabling resources to be targeted at medium to high risk offenders, the group which have been demonstrated in showing the greatest improvement from high quality intervention work, as identified by a Home Office SOC Policy Advisor in relation to the SOC Evaluation reports [3.4; 3.5]: *'[t]he evaluations demonstrate a positive impact on the lives of these young people...that demonstrate how to change the life trajectories of many very vulnerable young people'* [5.4].

The UK Minister for National Security and Economic Crime referred to the Ceredigion SOC-2 project at a briefing for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), 9 May 2019 [5.4]. The briefing, interventions project, and Dr Norris' evaluation work were also cited in a Home Office press release, 13 May 2019:

A project that the Home Office and Ceredigion Youth Justice and Prevention Service funds is helping around 30 young people by giving them an opportunity to recognise the consequences of becoming involved in serious and organised crime, and to learn to recognise high risk situations and practice ways of responding. [5.5]

The work also featured in the Home Office SOC Local Partnerships Bulletin in August 2019 [5.6]. The SOC project was nominated for a Howard League Community Award in 2018 and 2019 [5.7].

For the Head of CYJPS: *'Dr Norris' evaluations for the two Home Office projects have been pivotal in furthering our understanding of the way in which Serious and Organized Crime (SOC) manifests itself amongst the most vulnerable young people in Ceredigion'* [5.1]. As such, the Dyfed-Powys PCC has awarded funding for the CJYPS to continue using the intervention work utilised within these projects [5.2]. Dr Norris has an on-going role in the design and evaluation of this continuation of the SOC project though funding secured from the Serious Youth Violence

fund, delivering targeted interventions based on CYSTEM profiles [5.1; 5.2]. Approximately 100 young people have been provided opportunities through these targeted interventions. (Project on-hold due to Covid-19).

The approach advocated by Ceredigion Prevention Services is being formalised as a model for Welsh Government providing a template for youth justice practice across Wales [5.8.a]. Following the success of the Ceredigion model, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) awarded GBP30,000 in funding to formalise the approach into a proposed model for Youth Justice across Wales. Dr Norris will be a consultant in this project and deliver a revised version of CYSTEM [5.8.b; 5.8.c)]. (Delayed due to Covid-19).

As a continuation of Dr Norris' work within Youth Justice, he has also informed the Home Office's development and testing of a UK Prevent Intervention Toolkit aimed at practitioners working with people at risk of, or involved in, SOC [5.9]. A Home Office Policy Officer confirms, *'Dr Norris provided expert input in relation to delivering programmes with young people, vulnerability and assessment of risk. We are grateful for his time, case studies and documents he provided on the CYSTEM screening tool and the SOC checklist used in the Ceredigion interventions, elements of which were cited in the toolkit'* [5.9]. Dr Norris also contributed to South Wales Police Violence and Vulnerability Unit's work, developing a strategic framework for tackling serious violence in Wales [5.10].

A "SOC Workbook" was developed for use by YOT's and ancillary organisations for SOC intervention work [5.11]. The workbook includes material on risk-assessment, including CYSTEM and a SOC Checklist developed by Norris, and is used in the on-going SOC preventions work funded by the PCC. A dedicated 'Preventions' web-portal hosts the workbook, project details and information on local and national preventions work [5.11].

Dr Norris was also invited to work as a consultant with the Home Office 'Prevent' programme to design and deliver educational programmes for young people as part of a three-year intervention on SOC in Albania [5.12]. A Home Office Policy Advisor confirms: *'The work has provided the Home Office with a valuable insight into the nature of SOC vulnerability...which will be used further afield as part of the Prevent programme in the UK as well as for our work on Prevent upstream programme internationally'* [5.4].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 Email and Letter, Head of Ceredigion Youth Justice, 19 July 2019.
- 5.2 Letter, Police and Crime Commissioner Dyfed-Powys, 8 February 2021.
- 5.3 Final report, Ceredigion Youth Justice Screening Tool evaluation project, 20 July 2016.
- 5.4 Email and Letter, Policy Advisor, Serious and Organised Crime Prevent, Home Office, 24 July 2019.
- 5.5 Press Release, Security Minister launches SOC strategy in Wales, Advance magazine, 13 May 2019. Available at: www.adsadvance.co.uk/security-minister-launches-soc-strategy-in-wales.html
- 5.6 HM Government, SOC Local Partnerships Bulletin August 2019 Issue 11. See p.8 Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/842079/6.5900_HO_SOC_Local_Partnerships_Bulletin_issue_11_v6_WEB2.pdf
- 5.7 The Howard League for Penal Reform Community Awards 2019 and 2018 Shortlisted Projects. Available at: <https://howardleague.org/community-awards/2018-community-awards-shortlisted-projects/>; <https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/shortlisted-projects-2019.pdf>
- 5.8 a) Email, Head of Ceredigion Youth Justice, 7 January 2020; b) Email, Head Ceredigion Youth Justice, 25 August 2020; c) YOT Targeted Prevention-Wales-Pathfinder
- 5.9 Email and Letter, Lead Officer, Serious and Organised Crime Prevent Team, Home Office, 15 August 2019.
- 5.10 Email, Deputy Police Crime Commissioner, South Wales, 11 February 2019.

5.11 Preventions website, including SOC (Serious and Organised Crime) Workbook. Available at: www.preventions.co.uk, & SOC Workbook at www.preventions.co.uk > 'Resources' > 'SOC'

5.12 Email, Officer, Serious Organised Crime Prevent Team, Home Office, 12 February 2020.