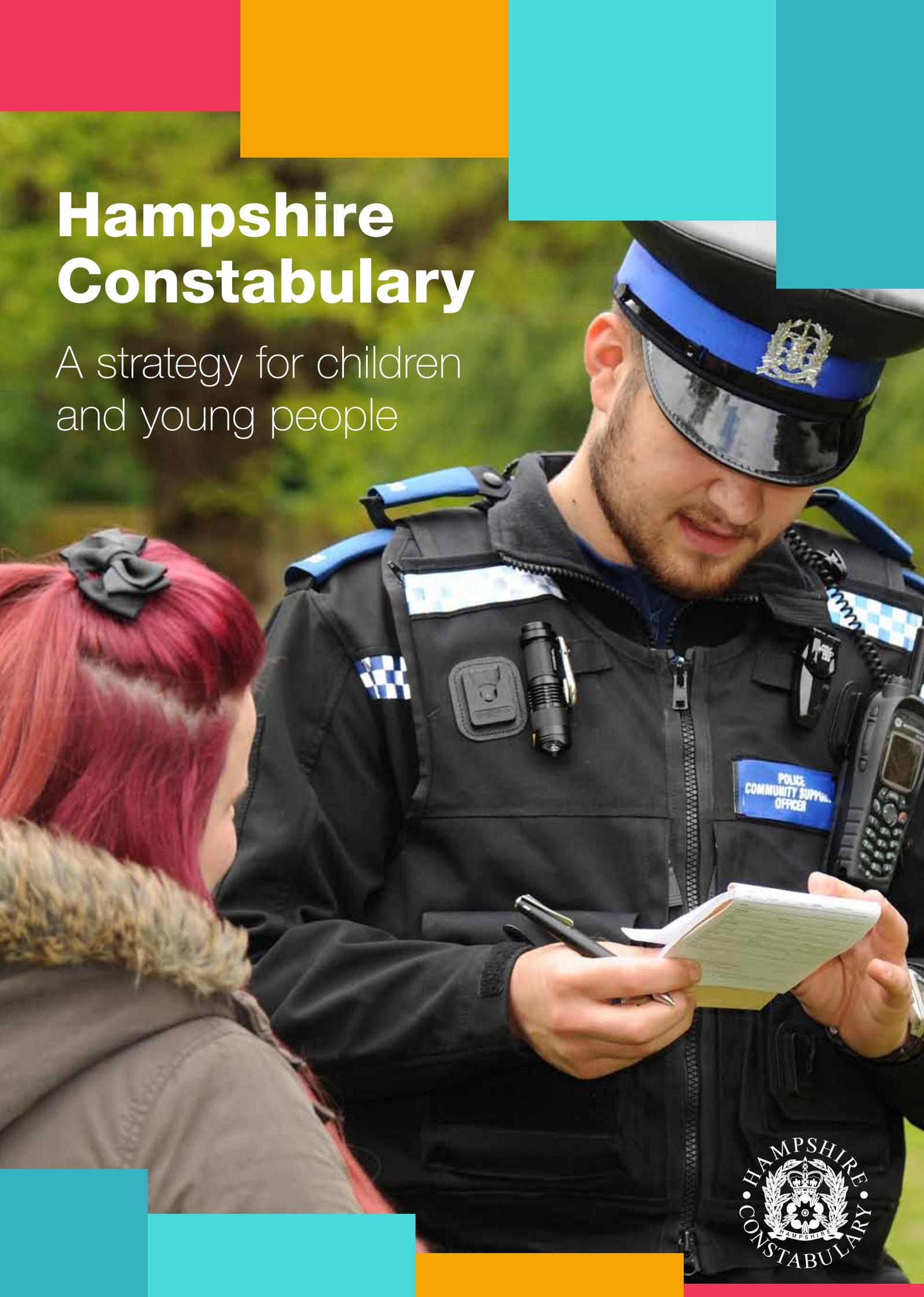


Hampshire Constabulary

A strategy for children and young people



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1. Introduction

Children and Young People (C&YP) account for 12million of the population in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The policies and procedures employed by the police will touch upon the lives of many of this group, as will the interactions and engagements that they find themselves in with the police.

Evidence suggests that the police as an organisation can have a significant impact on the lives of children and young people and it is with this in mind that Hampshire Constabulary has developed this strategy.

Children and young people are defined as everyone up to and including the age of 24 years and can be split into 3 distinct groups.

- Under 10
- 10 to 17 years of age- subject to the majority of legislation aimed at young people.
- 18-24 years of age- transition to young adults



2. Our Aim

'To work effectively with partners to provide a policing service, which delivers the best outcomes for children and young people'

3. Key Principles and Priorities

This strategy is guided by the key principles and priorities of the following two documents.

Chief Constables Council (CCC) Children and Young Persons National Strategy

- It is crucial that in all encounters with the police those below the age of 18 should be treated as children first. All officers must have regard to their safety, welfare and well-being as required under s10 and s11 of the Children Act 2004 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child.
- The vulnerability of C&YP should be identified and responded to effectively in order to protect them from harm.
- In all situations where C&YP come to the attention of the police a full understanding of their circumstances should be sought. It is unusual for a young person to be a serious offender without being a victim of circumstance or offending themselves. This may not affect the way we utilise the Criminal Justice System but should open our eyes to alternative avenues for addressing their behaviour.
- Every interaction is both an intervention and an opportunity. Engagement should be positive and opportunities sought to enhance our relationship with them.
- C&YP voices must be heard and their opinions respected.
- Policing supports evidence-based practice by keeping C&YP out of the Criminal Justice process unless necessary.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017

The priorities identified in the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime plan are,

- Improve frontline policing to deter criminals and keep communities safe.
- Place victims and witnesses at the heart of policing and the wider criminal justice system.
- Work together to reduce crime and ASB in your community.
- Reduce reoffending.



4. Outcomes

It is through working across the CCC's principles and Police and Crime plan's key priorities that Hampshire Constabulary and the OPCC will seek to achieve the following outcomes.

- Better relationships between young people and the police.
- A police service that is relevant to young people's lifestyles and ways of thinking.
- Recognised confidence in policing.
- Preventing young people becoming victims of crime.
- Responding to the needs of young people who are at risk of becoming victims or offenders.
- Support to help prevent stereotyping and avoid young people being drawn into contact with the criminal justice system.

5. Objectives

- Improved engagement between young people and the Police, giving opportunities for young people to influence police policy and practice.
- Work effectively with partner agencies to tackle issues affecting young people in Hampshire.
- Prevent criminalisation of young people by identifying alternatives to the Criminal Justice System to reduce further offending.

6. Governance

This strategy will be supported by a delivery plan and suite of performance measures overseen by the Youth Strategy Governance Group.

7. Key Areas of Delivery

The first four points are areas of focus highlighted within the CCC's Strategy based on the recommendations arising from the Children and Police Inquiry conducted by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children (July 2014).

The relationship between young people and the police

Research suggests that engagement activities with C&YP through schools and communities are generally perceived in a positive context. We will therefore promote good quality engagement activities which will be captured and shared through the Safe4Me toolkits and the SafetyNet knowledge bank. Most importantly we will listen to the voice of C&YP to inform, shape and guide our engagement.

Of particular note, we will make every effort to build relationships with diverse communities and hard to reach groups.

Looked After Children (Children in Care)

Looked After Children (LAC) are over represented in the youth justice system relative to their non looked afters peers. It should be recognised that LAC are vulnerable both to becoming victims and offenders often as a result of their own personal experiences, however use of the criminal justice system should not be used to resolve issues which in other circumstances would fall under parenting.

We will make every effort to avoid the unnecessary criminalisation of LAC through the development of a Local Hampshire Protocol aimed at reducing offending and criminalisation of LAC.

The adoption of restorative approaches should underpin the response to offending. This will require collaboration between other partners and agencies involved with LAC to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Detention, Custody and the Criminalisation of C&YP

Hampshire Constabulary Criminal Justice Department is committed to utilising a range of interventions and outcomes when engaging with young people who may be involved in crime. Our approach will reflect the underpinning principles of the National Youth Strategy and support the OPCC (Office of the Police Crime Commissioner) Commitments to ensure that together with our partners we will:

Recognise that every interaction with young people is both an intervention and an opportunity to ensure the police,

- Identify early help and intervention for young people at risk of formal entry into the criminal justice system and make best use of prevention and diversion schemes.
- Reduce the unnecessary arrest of young people and maximise restorative approaches to offending to ensure young people are not unnecessarily criminalised.
- Ensuring those at risk of appearing at court are subject of multi agency review and swift decision making to bring consistency of outcomes and intervention opportunities to address behaviour. (Criminal Justice Draft Out Of Court Disposal Strategy 2014 which complements the Youth Offending Team review 2015).
- Recognise youth victims and shape our service to meet their needs in the Criminal Justice system.

Stop and Search

We will engage with young people to help them understand the police use of stop and search powers, to gain their views on the issues that affect them and to utilise them in the scrutiny process.

We will gather performance data which will include age, gender and outcome in order to monitor identified themes in respect of young people and to identify areas for improvement.

The following points are seen as those which are also key areas of business relating to C&YP, the delivery of which is essential for securing the desired outcomes and objectives.

Safeguarding

Working in partnership with other agencies we will protect Children and Young People from harm, through the identification of vulnerability and the management of risk.

A priority must certainly be the management of those who go Missing from home and those at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation.

As chair of the partnership 4LSCB's (Local Safeguarding Children Board) Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Group covering Portsmouth, Southampton, the IOW and Hampshire, we are collectively committed to tackling the problem of CSE, and trafficking and their consequential impact on children and young people who go missing in our region.

Child Sexual Exploitation is one of the most important challenges for our Safeguarding Children Boards. We recognise and understand that it is our joint responsibility to prevent children becoming victims of this form of abuse.



Victims

We will work towards reducing repeat victimisation of children and young people through ensuring that appropriate support and advice is available, while recognising that a number of young offenders will also be victims of crime.

Efforts need to be made to inform young people of how to keep themselves safe in relation to specific crime types and where to seek help if they are at risk of becoming a victim. We will endeavour to take an evidence based approach to reducing repeat victimisation and to ensure that examples of good practice are captured and shared across the organisation.

Additionally, Chapter 3 of the Code of Practice for victims of crime gives additional entitlements for children and young people (under 18). We will ensure that the Code of Practice is adhered to, supporting children and young people through what can often be a very daunting process.

Partnerships

We will explore opportunities to work closely with partners to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. In particular a joint approach to strategic planning will ensure collaborative work, as well as avoiding duplication.

Hampshire Constabulary are key statutory partners on the governance boards of Youth Offending Teams and along with Health, Probation and Local Authorities are responsible through these boards for local youth justice outcomes. We will ensure that this means achieving the best possible outcomes for C& YP.

We will also engage in joined up activity to support national and local initiatives which have a significant impact on the care and well being of children and young people, in particular the Troubled Families programme which aims to achieve positive family outcomes through intervention and support.

8. Performance Measure

The areas of business which cover C&YP are complex with many interdependencies. In order for the implementation of this strategy to be effective a delivery plan will be developed which will focus on the activities necessary to change policing delivery in order to have a positive impact on the outcomes for C&YP.

As part of this process a number of key performance measures will be introduced in order to demonstrate how we have made a difference. If our approach is right we will improve outcomes for children and young people.





HAMPSHIRE Community Court



Where crime hurts
justice should educate
rehabilitate

