

Young people in trouble

"Darren's dropped all his old mates and started hanging out with an older crowd. Now he's buying clothes, games and stuff, but he won't tell me where he's getting the money from. Should I be worried?"

- Motoring, theft and handling are the most common offences committed by young people.
- Robbery accounts for less than 2% of all the offences committed by young people.
- The main reasons young people give for offending is boredom and peer group pressure. Young people also say that the two key deterrents to offending are:
 - The fear of being caught
 - Their parents reaction
- Research into the lifestyles and experiences of young offenders tells us that the following factors matter most in keeping young people out of trouble:
 - A stable and supportive family home
 - Consistent parenting
 - Attending and making good progress at school, training or at work

how to help

The Youth Justice System

The Youth Justice System in England and Wales is made up of all the institutions and public services that work with young people that offend; this includes Courts, Police, Probation, Prison Services and local Councils. The Government completely reformed this system in 2000.

South Tees Youth Offending Service

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) is a one-stop shop for all young offenders. The Youth Offending Service will assess each young person who has offended. Decisions will then be made by the team of specialists as to what steps should be taken to ensure the young offender keeps out of any further trouble. This approach balances the following aspects punishment (court orders) and support helping to meet assessed needs for example education, health inputs, parental, guidance.

Supporting Parents

Partners in Parenting (PiP) is a section of South Tees Youth Offending service offering a support and guidance service for parents and carers whose young people are offending or are at risk of offending.

The aim of PiP is to work with families in an effort to make changes within the family and increase awareness of the services open to them when their young people are experiencing problems.

PiP provides a framework for problem solving that parents can use to develop more positive and co-operative relationships with their young people. It helps to explore areas of young people's behaviour which parents find difficult to address such as non-school attendance, offending and anti-social behaviour. Parenting group programmes are also on offer and are a very good way of meeting with other parents in similar circumstances. Here PiP can help parents establish a greater understanding of their young person's behaviour and its effects on others.

One of the most important things we can do for our teenagers is to help them develop positive self-esteem. Usually when self-esteem improves, so do behaviour, standards of work and relationships with others.

In addition there are regular informal drop in sessions, themed sessions where various types of offending and challenging behaviour are discussed, coffee mornings and parent support groups.

Whilst PiP works with the majority of parents to help prevent offending by their children, there are times when PiP works with parents in a more intrusive way by managing court directed parenting orders.

The approach however is consistent and we value the worth of all parents whatever their circumstances.

WARNING SIGNS

There are many warning signs which might indicate something is wrong. Your child may come under the influence of negative group of friends; staying out late; new clothes or other items appear which cannot be explained; the use of drugs and alcohol.

ACTION

Raise your concerns with your child. You can seek help and advice from the local Youth Offending Service. Don't ignore the problem. Spending more time with your child in diversionary activity can be effective.

WHAT TO SAY

Try to stay calm, all children break the rules from time to time, some more than others. Be consistent in what you say and do. If you do impose a sanction stick to it.

PREVENTION

It is important that you take an active interest in your children. Know who their friends are and how they are doing at school. If you suspect something is wrong do something sooner rather than later.

CONTACTS

- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
020 7210 3033
- South Tees Youth Offending Service:
01642 501500 or
01642 534000 or
01642 513000

*Check the South Tees ACPC website for the latest phone numbers:
www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk*