



Prevention work reduces youth crime in Wiltshire

THE number of under-18s ending up in trouble with the police and courts is falling in Wiltshire.

In the past two years, there has been a fall of 13% in the number of 10- to 18-year-olds in Wiltshire being convicted or formally cautioned.

The figures have been issued by the Wiltshire Youth Offending Service and come in response to a report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) that highlighted a rise nationally in offending by under-18s.

According to figures gathered under the Freedom of Information Act, the IPPR said the number of children convicted or cautioned nationally rose by 27 per cent between 2002 and 2007.

But Ian Langley, head of Wiltshire Youth Offending Service, said local figures paint a positive picture and that these are due to the Service's prevention activity and that of other partners such as Police Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

He said there are five strands that aim to reduce the number of children and young people involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, offending or anti-social behaviour.

They are:

- The Families in Focus Team, which aims to provide an early warning system for children aged between eight and 13 who may be at risk of getting into trouble with the law in the future;
- The Youth Inclusion Programme, which is open to eight to 17-year-olds who are identified as being at high risk of involvement in offending or anti-social behaviour;
- Parenting programmes, which provide parents with an opportunity to improve their skills in dealing with the behaviour that puts their child at risk of offending;
- Mentoring, which pairs a volunteer with a young person at risk of offending. The volunteer's role is to motivate and support the young person on the scheme through a sustained relationship, over an extended period of time; and



- Restorative Justice, which provides opportunities for those directly affected by an offence to communicate and agree how to deal with the offence and its consequences.

Ian Langley said: "Wiltshire continues to be one of the safest areas to live and the fall in young people being convicted and warned over the last two years is further evidence of this."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The youth offending services in Wiltshire and Swindon are represented by chief officers on the Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board (WCJB).
2. The WCJB was set up in April 2003 to manage the CJS at a local level. It, along with the other 41 Local Boards across England and Wales, reports to the National Criminal Justice Board which supports them in their work to meet Public Service Agreement targets at a local level and reduce crime in Wiltshire
3. Wiltshire's CJB comprises chief officers from the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, HM Courts Service, the Probation Service, the Prison Service and the Youth Offending Service.
4. For further information please visit: <http://lcjb.cjonline.gov.uk/Wiltshire> or call Chloe Boyce, WCJB Communications Officer, on 01225 781216.