

## High Risk Young Offenders

### Focused on children most at risk, our fundamental purpose is to:

- make effective decisions about a need to refer a child to a Children's Hearing
- enable children and families to participate in Hearings
- provide suitable accommodation for Children's Hearings
- disseminate information and data to inform and influence improved outcomes for children and young people

A minority of young people pose a high risk of harm to themselves and to others. A key part of 'Preventing Offending by Young People: A Framework for Action' is to identify at an early stage which young people have the potential to harm others, and to intervene to prevent or minimise this risk.

SCRA carried out research to track the backgrounds of young people to the point when they were identified as potentially presenting a high risk to others, to help with the identification and management of these young people.



### Backgrounds of children

Young people who are potentially a high risk to others have backgrounds which are characterised by adversity from an early age, and they have often been victims of or witnessed harmful or risk taking behaviour by others, such as:

- Parental separation,
- Violence between adults, sometimes extreme (including murder) in the home,
- Parents who are offenders,
- Parents with drug and/or alcohol problems,
- Young people themselves were victims of physical abuse,
- Young people have mental health problems.



### Risks to themselves

These young people went on to develop behaviours that put themselves at risk:

- Alcohol and drug misuse,
- Running away from home,
- Truancy,
- Negative and older peer associations.



## Risks to others:

These young people went on to develop behaviour that could put others at risk such as:

- Anti social behaviour in the community,
- Aggressive and threatening behaviour in the home,
- Abusive to staff and pupils at school,
- Offending, sometimes serious (for example - carrying an offensive weapon or fireraising).

## Interventions

The young people received a range of interventions throughout their lives. At an early age, these were centered on supporting the family and the health of the young people and their parents.

As the young people moved to primary school age, interventions were more focused on the young person, including being cared for away from home, their educational, health (mainly mental health) and behavioural (ADHD or anger management) needs. However, supports were still being provided to help parents' health, substance misuse and domestic violence problems.

When aged 13 to 17 years, many of the supports provided when primary school age, were still in place, but these young people were now also receiving interventions to address their social isolation and exclusion in the community and their offending behaviour. When in their teens, they were also likely to spend time in residential or secure accommodation.

SCRA's research shows that children who go on to present a risk of serious harm, often have multiple needs and require a high level of support to change their concerning and violent behaviour. However, the research found that this group of young people had received interventions over a prolonged period of time but still went on to present a risk of serious harm. These findings support the 'Preventing Offending by Young People: A Framework for Action' aim of identifying these children as early as possible, and putting in place interventions to prevent them going on to be a risk of harm to themselves and others.

