

THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PROTOCOL FOR REDUCING THE CRIMINALISATION OF CHILDREN IN CARE & CARE LEAVERS

What is it?

An agreement between organisations to work together to:

- Help prevent children and young people who have been in care entering the criminal justice system.
- Understand the needs of those children and young people.
- Make sure those children and young people in the criminal justice system are treated fairly and have the right support.
- Make sure victims of crime are treated fairly and supported.

Why is this needed?

Research shows that children and young people who have been in care are over-represented in the criminal justice system and more likely to be criminalised for minor incidents (*In Care, Out of Trouble*, Lord Laming 2016).

Key points of the protocol

Responding to incidents

- Non-judgmental recording of incidents.
- Managed in-house where possible.
- Mitigating factors to be taken into account.

Restorative justice

- Aims to address and repair harm.
- A voluntary and safe process for all.
- Respectful to all parties.
- Facilitated by trained professionals.

Role of the police

- To be called where the situation cannot be safely managed.
- Custody only used as a last resort.
- Use of discretionary powers such as diversion schemes.

Young people in custody

- Support provided through the process by professionals such as social workers.
- A package of support in place upon young person's release from custody.

Who's on board?

These organisations have signed up to the protocol



Northamptonshire
County Council



Northamptonshire
Police

Crown Prosecution
Service



Northamptonshire
Youth Offending Service



Northamptonshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Northamptonshire
Probation Trust



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- Foster carers and professionals will try to resolve any incidents in-house rather than involving the police.
- If you are involved in an incident, your side of the story will be listened to and you will not be unfairly punished because you have been in care.
- People working with you understand the vulnerabilities that can affect care-experienced young people.
- If you are taken into custody, you will have the support you need to understand what is happening.



Oversight

The protocol is overseen by the Northamptonshire Youth Offending Management Board. This board includes senior representatives of Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and more. The Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board and the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership are also sighted on the protocol.

Want to know more?

If you would like more information about the protocol or would like a copy of the full version, please email:

tnorford@childrenfirstnorthamptonshire.co.uk