

Improving mental health outcomes for children and young people

Implementing the liaison model: examining the challenges and the gains

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Outline

- Background
- The liaison model: a way of working with complexity
- A practice example
- Challenges
- Successes

Background: the Need

- a pragmatic response to the identified needs of children and families
- services working with complexity
 - forensic CAMHS
 - sexually harmful behaviour
 - young people who have experienced sexual abuse
- services with specific expertise
- services which need to fit in and complement what already exists across agencies
- services which are perceived as useful at a range of levels

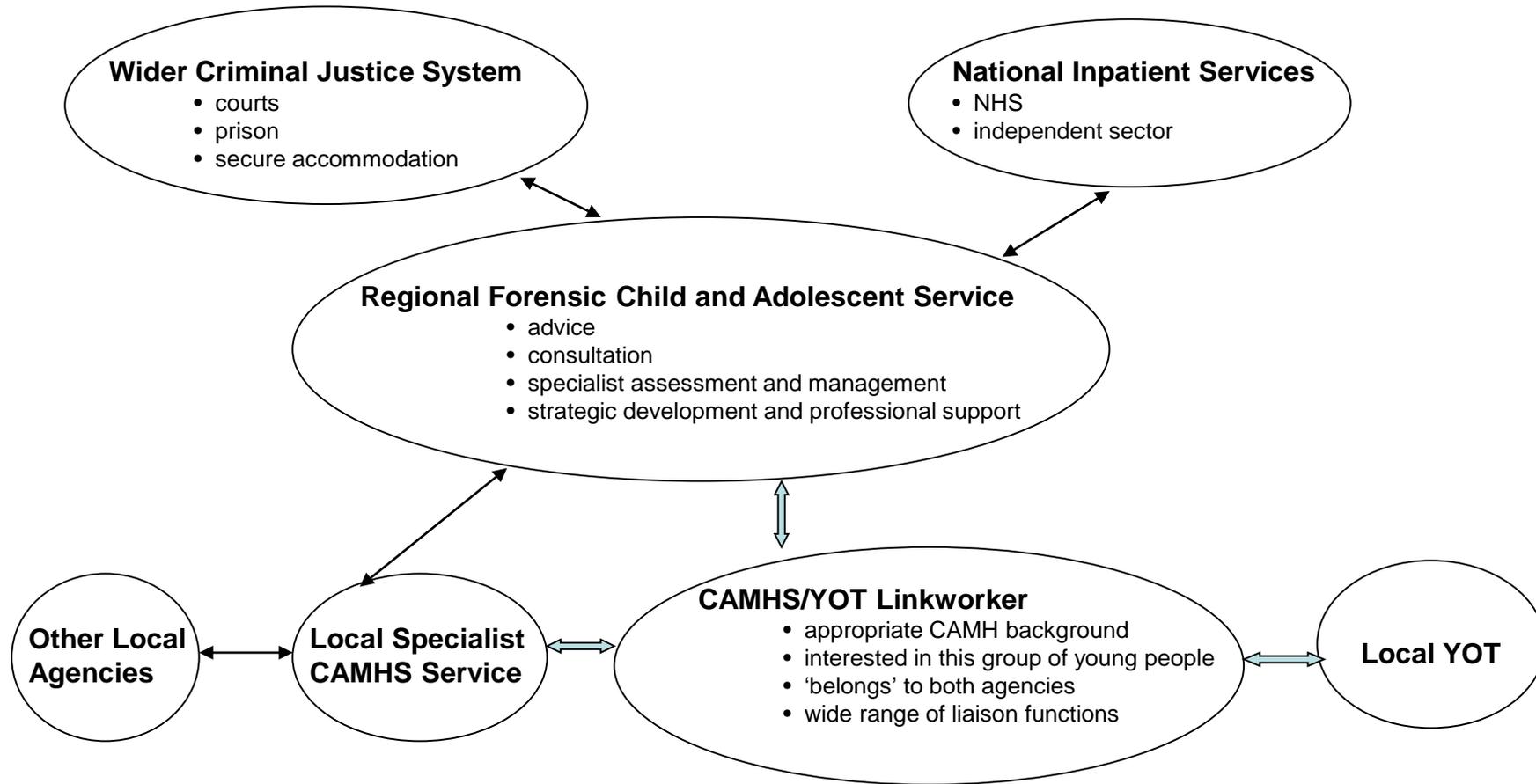
The Liaison Model (1)

- works in collaboration with other agencies frequently on their 'territory'
- Work with young people from a specific catchment (even if they are placed elsewhere)
- based on a stepped approach to professional, family or other concern
 - advice
 - formal consultation
 - assessment/intervention
- understanding of the particular circumstances of the referrer and young person

The Liaison Model (2)

- service should have a 'can do' philosophy:
- accessible at point of referral
- willing to tackle grey areas between different types of provision
- aims to be seen as collaborative **and** authoritative
- education and training of others
 - generic practitioners
 - more specialist
- identification of gaps in provision
- service development

An Example: Regional Community Forensic Child and Adolescent Service: Clinical Network



caring, safe and excellent

Regional Community Service: How it Works

- advice
- formal consultation
- assessment and intervention
 - wide-ranging access if clear need
 - joint working with local CAMHS
- strategic development
 - CAMHS/YOT linkworker network
- training at different levels
 - complex needs
 - structured risk
- varied liaison functions
 - local, regional, national

Community Team: Clinical Role

- Clinical
 - Forensic opinion in current CAMHS cases
 - Complex cases 'lost' to CAMHS in YOS, social care, custody, criminal process/courts
 - » What should be done with young person?
 - » Fitness to plead
 - » Secure Accommodation Orders
 - » Links with child protection
- Institutional work
 - » CAMHS/YOS linkworkers
 - » Links with national services and custody
 - » Strategic involvement
 - » Further developments

Challenges or potential pitfalls

- keeping the young person or family in mind
- consultation alone does not work
- advice/consultation must be credible and practical to all: undertaken by experienced team
- collaborative working does not mean lowest common denominator solutions
- having a specialist expertise does not excuse a service from generic working
- overcoming scepticism and managing expectation
- understanding other organisations and knowing how to overcome inertia
- choosing one's battles

Gains (1)

- a small experienced team can do a lot
- young people receive input in line with their needs
 - direct team involvement is reserved for situations where it is needed
- practical response to areas frequently perceived as specialist
- the wider professional community is not 'deskilled'
- wider understanding of 'therapy vs Therapy'
- a means of containing (and at times raising systemic anxiety)
 - defensible vs defensive practice

Gains (2)

- local multi-agency solutions to complex and worrying problems
- provision of service to young people across a variety of settings
- dynamic service response to changing wider context
- continued funding and service development after 12 years
- wider effects
 - cross agency working
 - development of CAMHS service model in line with 'Future in Mind'