

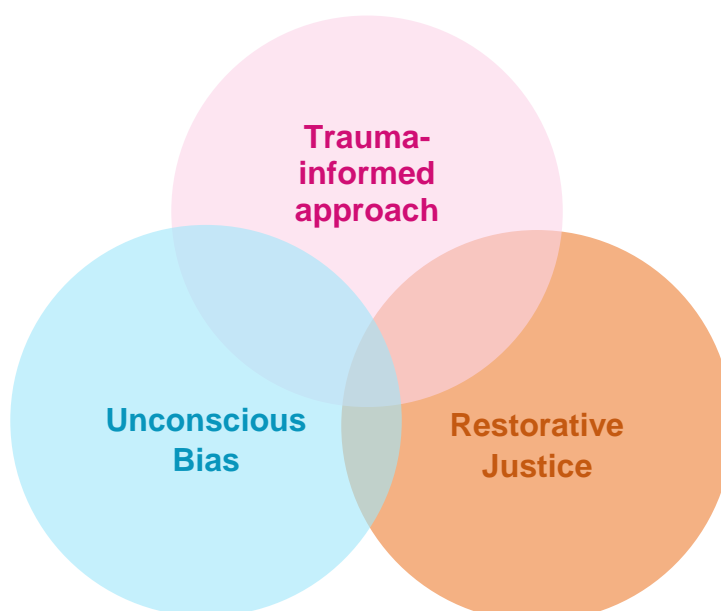
MJ Achievement Awards

London Borough of Lewisham – Workforce Transformation

Lewisham’s Whole System Model

In response to high levels of youth violence and re-offending the Youth Offending Service in Lewisham has developed an evidenced based service model by applying the theories of childhood trauma, restorative approaches and unconscious bias within the context of safeguarding. This model, and the workforce learning, development and change programme associated with it, has contributed to significant reductions in children and young people entering the youth justice system, lower rates of re-offending and reduced numbers of incidents of serious violence leading to less use of custody.

The **Lewisham Whole Systems Model** is based on three key elements:



Trauma-informed approach

Lewisham Youth Offending Service is now described as a ‘**Trauma-Informed Service**’ (*Department of Education – Innovation Unit, 2018*). A trauma-informed service is one in which service delivery is influenced by an understanding of the impact of violence and victimisation on an individual’s life and development.

Restorative Justice

Complementing and linking with the trauma-informed response, the team has been developing **restorative practice** which allows a specific focus on an incident to achieve learning and shift from shame, therefore contributing to greater capacity to process Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs).



Unconscious Bias

The third key element is increasing awareness of and understanding **bias** in its many forms across the youth justice system. Our model identifies potential bias at each stage in the system.

A key feature of our model is about the focus on the way the service is offered, i.e. the whole context in which it is provided, not just 'what' it entails. For us, this is about:

- **Safety** – creating spaces where people feel culturally, emotionally and physically safe
- **Transparency and trustworthiness** – full and accurate information about what's happening and what's likely to happen next
- **Choice** – an approach that honours an individual's dignity
- **Voice** – creating the opportunity where the individuals views, opinions and feelings are heard and acknowledged
- **Collaboration and mutuality** – healing happens in relationships and partnerships with shared decision-making
- **Empowerment** – Recognition of an individual's strengths to both build upon these and validate them.

How Lewisham has transformed the Youth Offending Service

Lewisham has comprehensively remodelled the Youth Offending Service, embracing an innovative and bespoke model based on a trauma-informed approach, restorative justice and unconscious bias.

We have embarked on a comprehensive programme of learning, development and change across the whole of the Youth Offending Service. In order to achieve this transformation, the team and partner agencies have received extensive training including handling vicarious trauma, and the secondment of a clinician to provide clinical supervision and transformational practice development. The Youth Justice Management Board have also undertaken training on the trauma-informed approach and there have been a series of workshops delivered to partners to highlight and address unconscious bias.

The transformation of the Youth Offending Service has been underpinned by Kotter's eight-stage model of change:

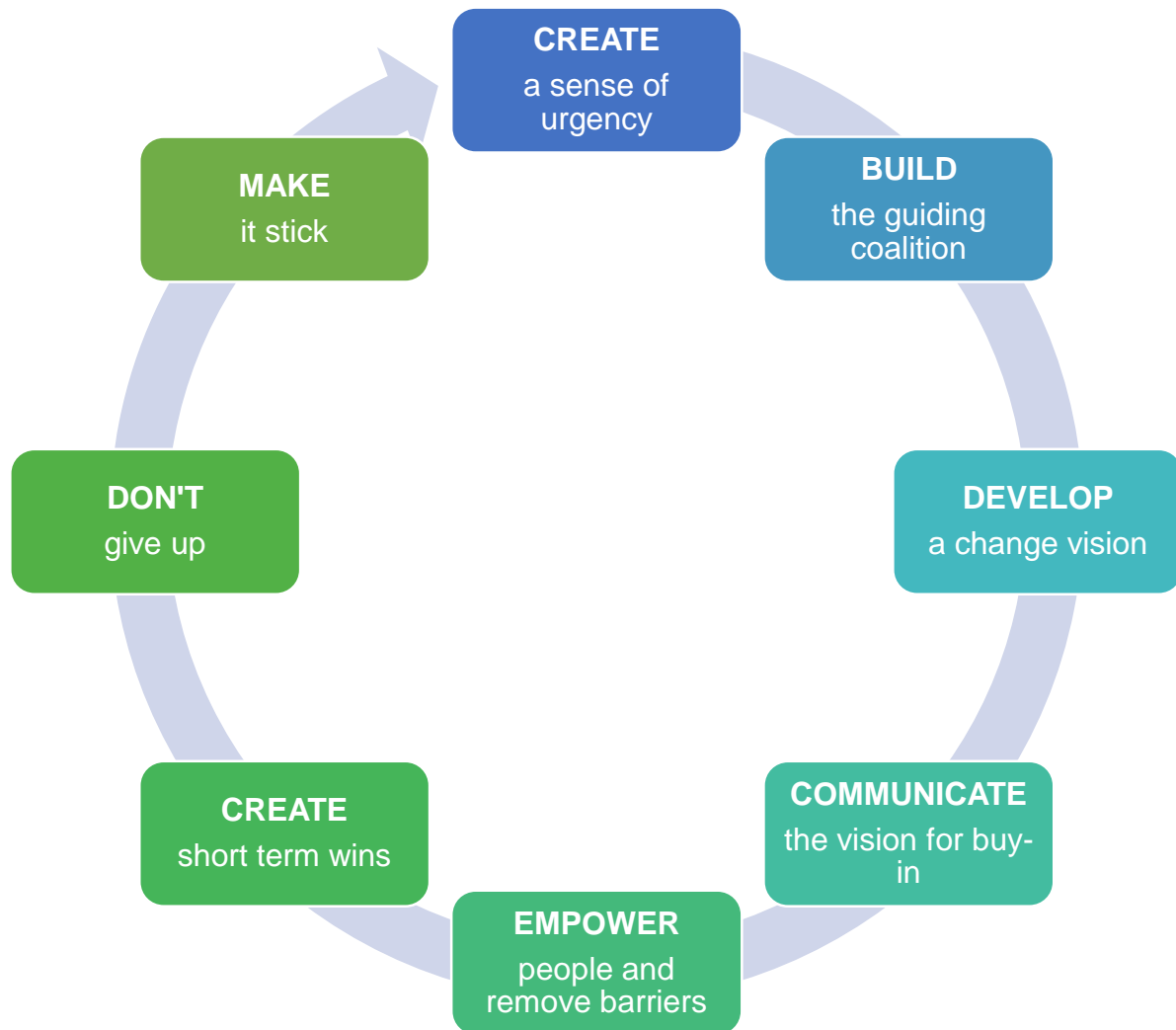


Figure 1 - "Leading Change", Kotter, 1995

The Kotter model formed the scaffolding required to implement full culture change, supporting the approach from strategic senior leaders to operational delivery.

The Lewisham Whole Systems Model for learning and development is built upon the following foundations:

- The provision of a **self-care** directory, detailing where to find appropriate help and support
- **Bespoke training** for specialised theory and practice areas
- **Reflective space** – regular, routine opportunities built in to provide space within practice
- **Management resilience** through adopting restorative management practices and techniques, including delegation and prioritisation
- Focussing **on quality outcomes** including performance improvement
- **Data savvy** – analysis/skills to understand data and present in ways to produce dialogue and greater understanding



- **Restorative language and approaches** – the language we use with each other, residents and clients is important. Ensuring we all have techniques to support an approach which recognises conflict, reframing, reflecting and rebuilding is essential.
- **Workforce trauma** – understanding the basic neurological development of the brain, stress, responses and self-care. The work we undertake can impact on us through vicarious trauma and so learning about how best to work and support one other and ourselves remains a key priority.
- **Modelling impact of context on work** – assessing and understanding the wider context and environment in which the service operates. Assessing risks beyond the immediate offer/individual and working in partnership to influence others.

Trauma-informed approach

The Youth Offending Service has embedded and integrated a trauma-informed approach. The staff team continue to embed the approach consistently so that practitioners are able to apply evidence, method and outcomes.

This means our service offers:

- Consistent, meaningful contact and trusting relationships
- 'Voice' of young person heard
- Removal of bias labelling and re-victimisation
- Support in moving to secure, organised attachments
- Reduction in fear through reduced stress/anxiety
- Partners co-delivery of the approach
- Monthly, one-to-one clinical supervision for staff
- Co-production and case formulation
- Intensive and consistent practitioners
- Interventions that process trauma to manage behaviour

Restorative Justice

Lewisham Youth Offending Service continues to lead in the roll out of **Restorative Justice** across Lewisham and is currently trialling a 'whole schools' approach through the provision of peer training, twilight sessions and coaching. Three Lewisham schools are currently undertaking a pilot immersive schools safety programme, working with the Local Authority and a training provider to address relationship harm caused by the offending behaviour. Staff from the schools have also attended a cross agency, three-day training event, together with police officers specialised in child sexual exploitation, representatives from in-borough children's homes providers (to support reducing criminalisation) and new Youth Offending Service staff. Follow-up coaching and



buddying is provided as part of the integration of skills and also the potential for a network practice forum to be established.

Unconscious Bias

Staff attended a series of one-day training sessions were undertaken to increase awareness and better understand **unconscious bias**. This was followed up with the provision of further training days during May/June 2018. A team follow-up exercise highlighted the positive impact using this approach has had on current work streams (e.g. court reports, interactions with young people), but also that much more can be achieved using the *'Identifying the potential bias at each stage'* framework, which is focused upon three core principles:

- **Reflect** - check response, reflect with colleagues, examine cultural assumptions
- **Reframe** – challenge without shaming
- **Redirect - Use the GRACES framework** (Gender, Race, Religion, Age, Ability, Appearance, Class, Caste, Colour Culture, Sexuality, Spirituality, and Sexual Orientation). Lewisham is now providing the training across all its services.

Outcomes and successes

60% of staff said that the training they received as part of this transformation had a high or very high impact on their practice and 70% said they could demonstrate this impact with specific case examples.

Staff feedback includes:

“Trauma-informed practice gave the staff more insight into what was going on”

“Curiosity’s coming back in the room now and I love that. I love hearing the challenge and the debate happening amongst practitioners.”

“The language around that has changed massively, but with that has been our approach to those things and now rather than seeing risk and vulnerability with the lens of this disobedient child, is not complying, isn’t thinking, and doesn’t have empathy. We have become better informed to understand, hold on a minute, actually that’s where it’s helpful to know a little bit about child development and a little bit about actually, how have these risks and the vulnerabilities that you’ve identified impacted?”

“You’re giving us permission to talk about how these things (trauma, burnout, feeling overwhelmed) affect us and permission to say it’s really hard”



The impact of our work has been recognised by the national Youth Justice Board:

YJBulletin

[Return to Cover Page»](#)

Print

Tackling serious youth violence in Lewisham

Sitting round a table during the first half hour of their contact with Lewisham Youth Offending Service, a child has opened up to their parent for the first time. They both discussed their frustrations and the child spoke about what led them to get into trouble with the law. "I didn't realise they felt that way", the parent confesses at the end of the session.

Over the past two and a half years the Lewisham model has achieved:

- A stable and highly skilled work force
- Higher than the London and England reduction average in reducing re-offending
- A halving of the numbers being sentenced to custody
- An intensive application of data collection and analysis across the partnership to inform strategic and tactical work.
- Excellent leadership capacity at strategic and service level ensuring that the implications of the adopted model are implemented thoroughly across the services and with partners.
- Refreshed Partnership Board functions which included close collective oversight of the Improvement Plan, Board member engagement with practice, as well as members' commitment to shared training on the Lewisham Whole Systems Model.
- A trauma-informed, violence reduction group work programme
- External endorsement from the Youth Justice Board Chair (Charlie Taylor) and the Under Secretary of State for Justice (Minister Argar) for best practice.
- Recognition from the Department for Education's Innovation department as a 'Trauma-Informed Service'
- The use of our model in both schools and the wider community, with A&E soon to follow.

Evaluation

Our model is being evaluated by Goldsmiths, University of London. The evaluation is focused on three perspectives of the changes to practice and delivery of Youth Offending Services in Lewisham. Those three perspectives are:

Staff

Young People
and Families

Partner agencies



Initial evaluation shows that practitioners feel that the trauma-informed approach chimes with the way they want to work - young people are at the centre of the service. There is some frustration and concern about differences in approach between services – this would ideally be solved by other services taking on a similar set of values. Practitioners displayed a sense of genuine pride in their work and in their service – the workload can be challenging, but there is a clear sense of personal satisfaction.

Staff wellbeing

Our model is characterised by a focus on **staff wellbeing**, namely:

- **A recognition of initial staff trauma and morale**
 - *“Trauma[-informed practice] was introduced from the idea of ‘let’s look at the impact on [staff] first and then think about your client group’”*
- **Clinical supervision provision**
 - *“I’ve used that space where if I have complex trauma cases or anything, any cases where I’ve just thought “wow, this young person, I’m really worried about them”, it’s another space that I can speak to someone outside the team or something like that”*
- **Pride in work**
 - *“I think within Lewisham I still believe we’re still passionate about the work that we do”*
 - *“Obviously the first thing is the passion, you care for the young person. But then second to that, you care about yourself. I care about myself.”*

Young People’s voice

- **Restorative Practice**
 - *“You need the young person’s voice”*
 - *“Just letting the young person speak and then the parents speaks about their feelings and then they’re brought together. So I’ve sat in one where it’s actually been quite powerful and the parents have actually fed back to me and said “that’s amazing”*
- **Remaining Barriers / concerns**
 - *“You know, you’re going straight in but you have to because you’ve got an assessment to write so you need to gather all that information. But it’s like, you’ve only just met that young person. And then the next day you’re asking what the issues are at home, really, really personal questions”*

Inter-agency and multidisciplinary working

- **A recognition of diverse backgrounds across the Youth Offending Service**
 - *“We’re an incredibly rich team in terms of skill and experience”*
 - *“I think that’s what keeps Lewisham very powerful in that sense because we are coming from a different background”*



- **Collaboration / Obstacles to working with other services**

- *“We’re dealing with a lot of complex needs... We need more services around them. And we cannot wait six months for a waiting list and there’s not enough space, or we don’t have the capability to work with them...we have to do it ourselves”*

- **Team Working**

- *“Where actually you have high-risk cases, young people that we are essentially more concerned about, that people don’t work just in isolation, that there is a team that can do a very different job than the actual case holder”*

Barriers to successful practice

- **Training and re-training / Developing YOS model**

- *“There’s so much more that I would love that we want. [But] I have definitely seen the change since 2014 to now”*
- *“[The model] is a good fit, I just think we’ve got a bit more work to do in clarifying it and understanding what it is”*

- **Educating others**

- *“You know, almost a priority needs to be to educate the benches and the judiciary”*

What next?

Building on the success of implementing the model in the Youth Offending Service, there are now plans to roll out the training offer to support and develop a trauma-informed approach across the whole of the Lewisham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership. The Lewisham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership is a partnership between all agencies, organisations and services in the borough that are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes:

- children’s social care
- police
- education
- early years and Sure Start
- health services
- youth offending teams
- probation services.

An expert has been commissioned to deliver a “train the trainer” course for 40 individuals across all agencies in the partnership and ongoing support and training will be offered to fully embed the model across the system.