

Report to the Police & Crime Commissioner

4th December 2014



Arrest Referral

Cleveland Police have had an arrest referral process in place for over ten years. This was previously run by Addaction. In April 2014 this was rationalised using police staff to initiate what is now a multiagency approach to referring people detained by police into appropriate drug, alcohol, welfare, housing, mental health and education support. The team are co-located with NHS and VCS mental health services in Middlesbrough Custody Office but cover the whole Cleveland area.

Part of their work involves mandatory referral into drug treatment using the Drug Intervention Programme where offenders suspected of misusing cocaine and heroin (known as 'trigger offences') can be drug tested and required to attend treatment programmes in the community where tests are positive. This is legally enforceable.

Arrest Referral Officers offer a service giving a wide range of support across the Cleveland Area. The aim is to reach people who are arrested in custody who are experiencing difficulties through the misuse of drugs and/or alcohol, or are affected by personal circumstance which lead them to being arrested.

Voluntary referral is offered to agencies including NHS, Social Services, MIND, Housing, Benefits Agency, Talking Therapies, the Moses Project and many more.

Daily Tasks of an Arrest Referral Officer are:

- Check for any issues and outstanding Drug Tests (Detainees can be unfit through alcohol/substance misuse and/or violence) from Middlesbrough and Hartlepool Custody.
- Check the Custody Whiteboard for any offences committed at both Middlesbrough and Hartlepool Custody. 'Trigger offences' require in-depth checks from police and partner information systems before testing. A 'trigger offence' does not automatically mean a drug test is needed. Drug Tests are not completed where the detainee is a juvenile, is already in treatment with an agency, is being held on warrant, has already been tested within the month, lives outside of the Cleveland area, or there is no drug issue (i.e. not known to agencies, any drug offences/intelligence available).
- Risk Assessment of every detainee that is arrested for any offence is checked for any mental health issues. This information can then be shared with mental health services. The same process is also used for the Immigration Service who work alongside Arrest Referral Officers.
- Detainees may be drug tested by Arrest Referral Officers. If the result is positive an appointment is made for the detainee to attend an initial assessment with the agency within their home area.
- A detainee can dispute the result of a drug test and in this instance the same procedure is followed, but the sample is retained and sent for detailed analysis. The appointment is made two weeks ahead to allow time for the sample to be analysed.

The detainee is notified by letter of the result and should the result be upheld then the appointment must still be attended.

- During the test the Arrest Referral Officers can glean information as to the needs/vulnerabilities of the detainee and see if any other referrals can assist the detainee (i.e. male in custody for shop theft, having stolen food. Divulges to Arrest Referral Officers that only committed the offence as has no money for food. Arrest Referral Officer makes referral to local council and informs detainee of how to claim food vouchers). During time with the detainee any information of interest gathered during the test is submitted by intelligence log. The test and its result is recorded on the Detainee log.
- Agencies return documents to the Arrest Referral Team to state whether the detainee has attended their appointment or failed to attend. Where a detainee has failed to attend their appointment, the Arrest Referral Officer then checks to see if the client was remanded in custody. When it is clear that there was no reason for missing the appointment the Arrest Referral Officer creates a case file to arrange for the Officer in Charge of the original offence to complete a summons file.
- At Hartlepool, the drug tests are checked by the Arrest Referral Officer, but the test is carried out by Detention Officers based at Hartlepool. The Detention Officer makes the appointment for the Detainee to attend an appointment with the agency in their home areas if the test is positive. No outside referrals are currently made within the Hartlepool area but this will be available in the future.
- All none 'trigger offences' will be assessed for the need to refer the detainee to relevant Agencies.
- Once training has been completed then the Arrest Referral Team will aim to provide alcohol interventions.

Figures are collated monthly and sent to partners in Local Authority areas. This is broken down on a daily basis and shows how many arrests were for 'trigger offences', the number of 'trigger offences' not tested, how many drug tests attempted, which were successful/negative, the outcome of which was positive/negative and if it was for Cocaine/Opiates. The purpose of the role is to reduce crime by removing the contributory factor which leads to a person committing crime in the first place. Some detainees might not have previously been offered help and the time taken performing the drug test can be used to talk to the detainee to offer that help.

Figures show an increase in the number of people who are in treatment working with agencies to solve drug problems.

Alcohol Figures are also produced on a monthly basis and sent to partners.

Examples of Success in Arrest Referral

- The Arrest Referral Team were asked to speak to an elderly gentleman who had been brought in for shoplifting. He was well dressed and well spoken and came from an affluent area. From conversations with him, he was in the early stages of depression and was having debt problems brought about by benefits being stopped. He was referred to Social Services to work with him understanding his benefits and what he was entitled to. He has not been back through custody again.
- A detainee who had not offended for many years and previously had a drug problem was arrested. He had stopped misusing drugs and was working as a heavy goods

operator. He had been laid off from his job 18 months ago due to new licensing requirements (which he didn't have). He had gathered together most of the money to take the new tests but is short of the cost so has returned to crime to fund it. He has been referred to Job Centre Plus who have discretionary funds to help with retraining to help stop him from offending.

Future Plans

Now the initial training and implementation phase has been completed, Arrest Referral Operators intend to speak to all detainees and glean any information with which we can help divert from a life of crime, or to gather intelligence.

Officers are also to be briefed so if they have any offenders they feel would benefit from our help then they can contact us directly, about providing people with that help as an alternative to arrest, using Restorative Justice processes.

A booklet is being completed as a point of reference to which more agencies can be added and a wider support network is being made available for detainees.