



Manchester Youth Justice Buddy Policy

- Guidance for practitioners on providing caseload cover when colleagues are not in work

Overview

Previous learning reviews of cases have highlighted the need for robust arrangements to be in place when Youth Justice case managers are not in work. It is important that children and young people have a named contact that they can go to in the event of a crisis or concern. Practitioners may be absent from work for a variety of reasons and this can be on either a planned basis (ie. annual leave) or an unplanned basis (ie. sickness absence etc). In addition YJB National Standards stipulate that paired workers must be assigned to certain orders (ie. Detention and Training Orders). This guidance document therefore sets out such arrangements:

Buddy System/Paired Worker

All practitioners must nominate a colleague to act as a 'buddy' who will (only whilst their colleague is absent):

- 1) be a point of contact.
- 2) provide oversight to the caseload of the colleague who is absent.
- 3) take responsibility for any enforcement action.
- 4) ensure that case records are kept up to date (although this does not remove the responsibility for other practitioners/Duty Officer to record their own contacts on Childview with any cases that are dealt with).

All arrangements must be recorded on the Leave Sheet (attached) and sent to your manager. It is expected that Youth Justice Officers buddy with another Officer or Support Officers buddy with another Support Officer. However, it may be possible – subject to management approval – for Support Officers to cover a Youth Justice Officer’s cases under certain circumstances. Whilst it may be difficult for one person to act as a Buddy for a full caseload the case-holder may appoint a number of buddies. This must be clearly stated on the Leave Sheet (attached). However should leave be longer than anticipated or in incidents of long term sick Managers will reallocate cases on a temporary basis.

Case Management Leave Sheet

All case-holders must complete a leave sheet prior to taking leave (or when out of the office for a lengthy period). This allows the responsible case-manager to allocate tasks/pass on information and issues to individual members of the team/service. This should then be sent to managers who need to know who is overseeing the case in your absence. Case-managers should also let young people know who to go to in their absence.

Use of Duty

It is generally anticipated that future appointments for young people will be planned in advance, making use of other professionals, agencies and other appropriate services. However, in addition to planned appointments with other professionals/agencies and a nominated ‘buddy’ it may still be appropriate for cases to be seen by Duty officers, especially when leave is unplanned. However, it is expected that the Duty system is not overloaded and where possible the nominated buddy re-arranges appointments, responds to critical issues and seeks management oversight when necessary.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Melsay', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Date 23.10.17

Date of Implementation: 23.10.17

Date of next Review: 23.10.19