Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP)

About GMYJUP’s KTP

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Our Knowledge Transfer Partnership was the first of its kind in the field of youth justice, and was also a first for Manchester Met. University’s Faculty of Humanities Languages and Social Sciences.

Worth close to £120,000 in funding from the Arts & Humanities Research Council, the Economic & Social Research Council and the Greater Manchester YJS, the project’s ambitions were to reform youth justice service provision in Greater Manchester.
Our KTP involved a two-year secondment of a researcher from MMU to the GMYJS, developing an entirely new model of collaborative working in the youth justice field.

In the context of enhanced devolution, the KTP has provided an particularly unique opportunity to inform youth justice transformation in Greater Manchester.
The KTP project has focussed on facilitating bi-directional transfer of information between academia and practice, building on the foundations of GMYJUP. Working together, academics and practitioners set out to aid the development of wide-ranging, effective practice within our Youth Justice System, focussing on a few areas of particular interest...
1. Young people’s right to participate

The UNCRC states that children have a right to express and have taken into account their opinions on decisions that affect them, *(UNCRC, 2008: Article 12)* and children in conflict with the law also have the right to contribute to an effective response to their own behaviour.

However, in practice young people are rarely given these opportunities, and are not typically seen as a source of ideas/innovation *(User Voice, 2001)*

And it’s not just practice: “**voices of young offenders themselves are…rarely heard…**” in research or criminological theory *(Barry 2006: 21)*

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2. Treating young people as distinct

...as children first and offenders second

Models such as Children First Offender Second (CFOS) (Haines & Case, 2008) argue for more acknowledgement of young people's status as children and caution against thinking of them as ‘miniature adults’.

Child-friendly approaches argue for prioritising engagement over enforced compliance, participation over prescription and instruction, and capacities & strengths over deficits & differences to adults (Case & Haines, 2015).

References:
...as **adolescence** as a **period of transition**

During adolescence, a young person’s developing cognitive abilities enable them to begin to make sense of life experiences and evaluate their significance as they **construct their adult identities** *(Robinson, 2016: 94)*

However, all adolescents remain **precariously poised** between childhood & adulthood *(Barry, 2006)*

...and opportunities for **marginalised** young people in transition are **particularly limited**, leaving them attempting to fashion **positive identities** from difficult circumstances *(Robinson, 2016)*
3. Learning from Academic Literature

Research seeking to interpret desistance literature for application in practice with young people stresses **eight central themes**:

1. **Desistance is a difficult and complex process, likely to involve relapses. We need to be realistic and find ways to manage setbacks/difficulties constructively, recognising that it will take time.**

2. **Desistance is an inherently individualised and subjective process, so approaches must accommodate and exploit identity and diversity. One-size-fits-all interventions will not work.**

3. **The development and maintenance of motivation and hope are key tasks for criminal justice practitioners.**

4. **Desistance can only be understood within the context of human relationships; both relationships with workers and those others who matter to the young people.**

5. **Despite focus on young people’s risks and needs, they also have strengths and resources that they can use to overcome obstacles to desistance and that we must support and develop.**

6. **Desistance involves the discovery of self-efficacy or agency, so interventions must encourage and respect self-determination; working “with” offenders not “on” them.**

7. **Interventions that only develop human capital (i.e. capacities & skills) won’t be enough, we must develop social capital & opportunity to apply these skills & practice newly forming identities.**

8. **The language of practice should recognise positive potential and development, and seek to avoid identifying or labelling people with the behaviours we want them to leave behind.**

Weaving these **areas of focus** together, we developed a **participatory research project** which produced a new framework of youth justice practice, called **Participatory Youth Practice (PYP)**.

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2. Treating young people as distinct
3. Learning from academic literature
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any questions?

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