

Youth intervention workbook – a diversionary approach to low-level offending

Kent Police have developed intervention workbooks to divert young people away from low-level offending and raise awareness around the impact of being involved in criminal behaviour.

First published

3 August 2026

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Diversion
Topic	Criminal justice Offender management
Organisation	Kent Police
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2025–27 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Kent Police
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Key details

Partners	Police Business and commerce Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Education Government department Local authority Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2024
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Children and young people Families General public Offenders Victims

Aim

The aims of the intervention workbook are to:

- engage with young people who have been involved in low-level offending and have had limited or no previous contact with the police or criminal justice system
- divert young people away from harmful behaviour and criminal activity
- encourage reflective learning through law education and case studies, helping young people to understand the underlying causes of their behaviour
- identify any wider safeguarding concerns and signpost young people to appropriate support services

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the intervention workbook are to:

- improve engagement with young people and enhance the support offered to families
- improve the identification of safeguarding concerns
- increase the number of referrals made to partner agencies
- raise young people's awareness of the impact of harmful behaviour and criminality

Description

Kent Police introduced intervention workbooks to increase the use of the investigative closure code outcome 22, where a diversion intervention has been used when the outcome of the case has been declared as no further action.

Designing and testing process

The intervention workbooks were developed by the force's youth justice and child centred policing teams. Both teams drew on their experience and expertise in working with children to identify key themes, enabling the incorporation of basic legal education and ensuring that each workbook was tailored to the type of offence committed. Kent Police also consulted the Home Office, the Youth Endowment Fund, the Ministry of Justice, and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Children and Young People's leads.

The intervention workbooks cover a range of topics and themes intended to support young people and their families. Kent Police currently includes the following themes:

- theft
- violence
- public order
- criminal damage
- weapons
- wildlife crime
- e-scooters
- catapults

During the design process, the intervention workbooks were tested by operational officers and 60 cadets aged between 13 and 18. The purpose of the six-month trial was to assess usability and identify any issues or areas for improvement. Throughout the trial, several enhancements were made in response to feedback, including the addition of more visual content and a review of the terminology used within the documents.

The design process has continued to evolve and now includes:

- victim impact videos
- images
- additional sections to assist with administrative functionality

The intervention workbooks were created using the Office 365 (O365) platform, enabling the force to develop and maintain them at no additional cost, retain control over the content, and make amendments efficiently. Using O365, the intervention workbook can be accessed through the force's youth justice SharePoint pages or through the Patrol app available on officers' devices.

The design process was supported by the head of command and the force crime registrar.

Intervention workbook

The intervention workbooks are completed during a one-hour voluntary meeting between an officer, the young person, and an appropriate adult, such as a parent or carer. During the meeting, the officer explains the process and outcomes. They also support the young person in completing the workbook, rewording or explaining any elements that are not understood. Although there is no pass or fail outcome, the officer determines whether the young person has engaged sufficiently with the process. Once the meeting has concluded, a completed copy of the workbook is saved and uploaded to the investigation record.

Initially, the intervention workbooks were provided to child-centred policing officers however, they have now been rolled out across the force. Since their introduction, approximately 850 officers and staff have received one-hour, in-person training on when and how to use the workbooks.

Overall impact

- The workbook provides officers and staff with a practical and accessible intervention tool. Since 2024, 92% of young people who have completed an intervention workbook have not received a

further formal outcome.

- Staff feedback has been positive, with officers reporting that the workbooks are easy to use and provide a practical means of resolving lower-level matters in a more meaningful way.
- The workbooks are also available for use as part of community resolutions, where they can form one of the agreed conditions, where appropriate.

Learning

- Officers and staff have welcomed having a tool that complements other diversionary initiatives. The workbooks were straightforward to create and amend, resulting in no additional cost to the force.
- There have been technological barriers to using O365. The intervention workbook can be difficult to share outside the force, and some officers have experienced issues saving copies. To address these challenges, amendments have been made to the workbook, and a PowerPoint presentation has been developed to support other forces wishing to implement a similar approach.
- Kent Police has yet to undertake a full academic evaluation of the initiative and is therefore unable to fully assess the impact of intervention workbooks at this stage.
- To support the design and implementation process, it is essential to involve partner agencies at the earliest opportunity.
- For accessibility reasons, it is important to incorporate a range of media, including images and videos.

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