

## Tilley Award 2006

### Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the Guidance. Please complete the following form in full and within the word limit. Failure to do so could result in disqualification from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to Tricia Perkins; [patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

All entries must be received by noon on Friday 28th April 2006. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262. Any queries regarding other aspects of the awards should be directed to Michael Wilkinson on 0207 035 0247 or Lindsey Poole on 0207 035 0234.

Please tick box to indicate whether the entry should be considered for the main award, the criminal damage award or both;

Main award

Criminal Damage Award

Both Awards

#### 1. Details of application

Title of the project; Family matters? Families matter!

Name of force/agency/CDRP: Cumbria Constabulary

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors): PS Mark Wear QPM

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Name of endorsing senior representative Mr Neil Rhodes

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s) Assistant Chief Constable

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Cumbria Constabulary

Carleton Hall

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Cumbria Constabulary CA10 2AU

## 2. Summary of application

In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project. Include details of the problem that was addressed a description of the initiative, the main intervention principles and what they were designed to achieve, the main outcomes of project particularly in relation to the problem, evidence was used in designing the programme and how the project is evaluated.

A meeting with the head of a Secondary School in Workington the West Cumbria, Area Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, raised concerns about the behaviour of three brothers, D, S and K, who were pupils at the school. The behaviour of the boy's parents was also raised as an issue.

Scanning of police incident logs and of complaints made to the Registered Social Landlord responsible for the area where they live highlighted the whole family as a problem.

Incidents involving the three brothers ranged from verbal abuse to assaults on pupils and staff. All of the brothers had received fixed term exclusions from the school. When the boy's behaviour was raised with the parents, the head of the school was increasingly met with hostility. This had resulted in the father being excluded from the school premises. Similar problems were being experienced outside the school environment.

A case conference was convened which involved the parties interested in the family. This included representatives from the Police, CDRP, Education Welfare, School and Derwent and Solway Housing Association, Allerdale Borough Council, Connexions, Youth Offending Service and the National Children's Homes (NCH).

This resulted in a representative from the NCH making contact with the family to gain evidence of problems within the family home.

When the conference re-convened the NCH representative reported that there were a great number of issues that needed addressed within the family unit. It was felt that issues within the family home were impacting and causing bad behaviour outside the home.

These issues include a lack of assertive parenting, lack of clear communication between family members, no respect for authority, poor eating (dietary issues), counselling needs for one of the boys and a lack of positive family experiences.

It was decided to deal with the family unit as a whole, through a mixture of enforcement and support. In doing this, the family were being given an opportunity to become 'functional' and those affected by the boys behaviour were being offered protection from that behaviour.

Interventions included counselling, positive family activities, the use of an ASBO, addressing educational needs and tenancy enforcement.

It is fair to say that the interventions introduced to look at the problems surrounding the family have made a difference. While it has to be accepted that there will still be incidents both in and outside the schools, the initial results show that incidents have been dramatically reduced.

### 3. Description of project

Describe the project following the guidance given in no more than 4000 words

#### Scanning

As a result of a meeting with the head of a Secondary School in Workington the West Cumbria, Area Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, raised concerns about the behaviour of three brothers, D, S and K, who were pupils at the school. The behaviour of the boy's parents was also raised as an issue. Scanning of police incident logs and of complaints made to the Registered Social Landlord responsible for the area where they live also highlighted the family as a problem.

#### Analysis

Initial involvement with the CDRP Anti Social Behaviour co-ordinator came about during a discussion with the head teacher of a secondary school in Workington. This discussion surrounded a general problem of Anti-Social Behaviour in the school.

In particular the school had problems with three brothers D, S and K. Analysis of school incident reports over a three month period highlighted that of 150 incidents which had been reported internally, over 100 of the incidents related to the three brothers

Incidents involving the three brothers ranged from verbal abuse to assaults on pupils and staff, disobedience, with the most serious incident involving the placing of staples in a microwave oven and switching in on, it then blew up, with pupils and staff narrowly escaping injury. None of these incidents, especially the serious ones had been reported to the police, as although serious the school did not regard police involvement as an option.

Dealing with the three brothers was diverting teaching staff away from teaching, therefore in a wider context their behaviour was affecting not only those who they abused and assaulted but also other pupils as well.

All of the brothers had received fixed term exclusions from the school. One brother, K, had received a total of 22 days of fixed term exclusions in a four-month period.

Head teachers may impose a maximum of 45 fixed term exclusion days in any school year, and may consider permanent exclusion for pupils who pose a continued concern where all strategies appear to have failed or in the case of serious breaches of the Schools Disciplinary Code.

As a result of their behaviour, all brothers were in danger of permanent term exclusion, although this may have seemed an easy solution to the problem it would have meant that the school would have lost approximately £10,000 in funding.

The school was receiving over £3000 per year per pupil in the school

The role of Cumbria Education Welfare Service is to promote a child's rights to education and to challenge any barrier to this. This is achieved through support, partnership and challenge with pupils, parents, schools and other agencies.

The School had, at the time, implemented a very wide range of strategies in an attempt to support the brothers and thereby avoid exclusions. This had been done through direct curricular and pastoral interventions and had involved the Local Education Authority Support Services.

These services included reports being prepared by the Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty Specialist Teaching Service, the Education Psychological Service and a referral being made to the Pupil Referral Unit. Despite this work further exclusions appeared inevitable as the boys behaviour continued to contravene the Schools Behaviour Policy.

When the boy's behaviour was raised with the parents, the head of the school was increasingly met with hostility and a refusal by the parents, especially the father, to accept that his sons were doing anything wrong.

This had resulted in the father being excluded from the school premises.

Outside of school the brothers had come to the attention of the police on a small number of occasions, twenty-one in a three-month period. This was as a result of their involvement in verbal abuse towards members of the public, acts of minor vandalism and alcohol related disorder.

In the three-month period all brothers, the youngest, K, being twelve, had had alcohol confiscated from them while they were in public places.

The majority of the incidents reported to the police had occurred near to the family home, although they weren't necessarily restricted to the estate where the boys lived.

Incidents reported to the police, that had occurred in the vicinity of the family home had also been reported to the landlord of the family home, Derwent and Solway Housing Association.

The behaviour of the boys was regarded as so serious that the Housing Association were starting the process of evicting the family and applying for Anti Social Behaviour Orders to be made against the three brothers. Evicting the family was a lengthy and costly process. Previous experience had shown that eviction of a family could take up to two years and cost the housing provider in excess of £15,000.

As part of the analysis and to gain as much information about the problem as possible a case conference was convened which involved the parties interested in the family. This included representatives from the Police, CDRP, Education Welfare, School and Derwent and Solway Housing Association, Allerdale Borough Council, Connexions, Youth Offending Service and the National Children's Homes (NCH).

This conference resulted in a representative from the NCH making contact with the family to gain evidence of problems within the family home.

When the conference re-convened the NCH representative reported that there were a great number of issues that needed addressed within the family unit. It was felt that issues within the family home were impacting and causing bad behaviour outside the home.

These issues include a lack of assertive parenting, lack of clear communication between family members, no respect for authority, poor eating (dietary issues), counselling needs for one of the boys and a lack of positive family experiences.

Through the information provided by the Scanning and Analysis it could be seen that the problems caused by the family were far more complex than the problems, which when taken at face value could be regarded as the three boys causing problems of nuisance and disorder.

### **Defining the problem**

It was fair to say that the scanning and analysis identified that the family, as a unit, was dysfunctional.

It was therefore decided to deal with the family unit as a whole through a mixture of enforcement and support.

By doing this, the family were being given an opportunity to become 'functional' and those affected by the boys' behaviour were being offered protection from that behaviour.

The main objective was to make the family functional again.

## Response

Initially the three brothers education provision was addressed. In consultation with Education Welfare, the school, which they attended and the family it was agreed that two boys would remain at the school and the third boy, at the request of the parents, would be moved to another secondary school in the area on a temporary basis.

An education plan was implemented. This involved:

- The move to another Secondary School for one brother, K, on a fulltime 6 week 'trial'
- K would initially be placed in the Schools Pupil Study Centre (small group/specialist staff/differentiated curriculum environment)
- D and S would remain in their current school
- Mr. and Mrs. W would attend weekly review meetings at the schools to discuss the progress with the respective Head teachers.
- The Education Welfare Officer, would keep regular contact with all parties and would provide session work in the schools with the three brothers.
- The school's Learning Mentor would provide ongoing monitoring and contact visits with all brothers.
- The NCH Family Centre would liaise very closely with staff at both schools as part of their role and provide advice and direct support as required.
- Mr. and Mrs. W would join a Parenting Support Group facilitated by the Education Welfare Service and Youth Offending Team
- An approach was made to the Connexions Service regarding available support to the brothers
- Regular Multi-Agency review meetings were convened to maintain momentum and assess the progress; these meetings involved both Mr. And Mrs. W.

The plan formed part of the comprehensive intervention program delivered over several months. The group managed to balance both individual service agendas and agreed common aims. The spirit required was summed up by the Police Inspector as 'the need for all agencies to show a united front to the family and be open and honest about the consequences of failure'.

The Housing Association made a suspended possession order against the family, which reinforced the serious nature of the situation that the family was in, as if they did not engage with those willing to offer support they were likely to face eviction from their home.

To offer some protection to pupils and residents in the areas where they live all three boys were given the opportunity to enter in to Acceptable Behaviour contracts as an attempt to set boundaries of what was and what was not acceptable behaviour.

S continued to offend which resulted in the Borough Council applying for an interim Anti Social Behaviour Order and subsequent full order to be made against him.

The worker from the NCH provided the family with regular support through one to one contact and engagement in family based activities. These activities included

- Healthy eating taster sessions to try to encourage the family especially the boys not to eat 'junk food.'

- Family days at a local outward-bound centre in an attempt to bring about family bonding.
- Father's Day trips involving Mr. W and his sons, as a lack of involvement between father and sons had been identified.
- A 1:1 Assertive Parenting Programme was provided to help the parents control their sons in a positive manner
- 1:1 Counselling was provided in the school environment for K

### **Assessment**

The partnership considered a number of key issues, including: the continued behavioural problems presented in school and the community; the differing perceptions around the cause, blame and need for change. The multi-agency group shared goals to support the family: and the outcomes, which were required in order for the family to move forward.

The Education Welfare Service's role in this process was to support the management and implementation of the education-based interventions and to inform the wider group of the underpinning legislation.

One of the key factors to achieve positive change was Mr. and Mrs. W commitment to overcoming their difficulties, and although this was not always easy to secure, it remained the single most important issue for the provision of services.

Mr. and Mrs. W have faced many challenges in the course of this intervention, not least in their relationship with the school. This understandable difficulty required common ground to be found, even where perceptions varied hugely in respect of the incidents in school and the Head teachers responses to the boys behaviour.

To illustrate how challenging this became through the analysis it was identified that: Mr. W was at one point formally instructed not to go onto the school site following a particularly heated incident between himself and the Head teacher.

The placement for K at another school resulted in the family being offered an initial six 6-week supported 'trial period.' K's education at the new school initially began with him being placed in the Pupil Study Centre, but senior staff in the school felt that Kieran needed to be quickly moved to mainstream classes to fully assess whether the trial period was working.

K managed the transition extremely well. He had only two days of specialist support before being placed in to 'mainstream' schooling Although a number of incidents occurred where his behaviour contravened the schools behavioural policy, there was a huge improvement in K's response. When problems arose, key members of the multi-agency group were able to respond rapidly to schools concern, providing regular session work for K to review his progress and seek redress and reconciliation where necessary.

Following two 'extensions' of the trial period K was taken on to the school roll and as such became a permanent member of the school. He had proved beyond reasonable doubt that he both wished to become a permanent pupil of the school, and was capable of sustaining his place without further need for exclusion.

D and S were offered support within their school, which has resulted in a dramatic reduction in offending.

Although this action has meant that the school lost funding for one of the boys when they transferred, they have retained the funding for the other two.

Teachers in both schools are now able to teach their pupils instead of having to spend a considerable amount of time dealing with the boys' behaviour.

Mr. and Mrs. W kept close communication with both schools and their regular review meetings proved crucial in the overall response.

The imposition of the Anti social Behaviour order on S, was supported by his parents and in effect stopped him offending. He has not broken the conditions of the order. D and K have made minor breaches of the conditions of their Acceptable Behaviour contracts but it has not been necessary to progress these breaches towards Anti social Behaviour Order applications.

To date none of the boys have received exclusions from their respective schools and their attendance is now regarded as excellent.

The NCH worker has found that the family's engagement in the activities provided by the partnership has helped bring about a significant change in the boys behaviour. Interventions as simple as looking at the family diet to ensure that the boys weren't living off crisps and foods containing additives have produced amazing results. The interventions have helped the family to act as a functional family unit.

The parents have been provided with a clearer understanding of their parental responsibilities. When difficulties have arisen instant support has been able to be provided to the family to overcome their problems.

Partnership working has negated the need for eviction; therefore the housing provider has saved the cost of having to take these proceedings.

It is fair to say that the interventions introduced to look at the numerous problems surrounding the family have made a difference. While it has to be accepted that there will still be incidents both in and outside the schools, the initial results show that incidents have been dramatically reduced.

Most importantly, perhaps, is the way that the family themselves now interact and communicate. The family is now functional, still has a home and operates in the same way as any other family would. Consistent multi-agency working, alongside a commitment from the family has achieved significant change.

Fortunately families as dysfunctional and problematic as the W family are in the minority in the West Cumbria Area. Dealing with the W family has provided the partnership with a model to deal with similar problem families and as such has been used by the partnership to deal with a small number of other problem individuals.