

Site

North East NPS (Co Durham & Darlington)

Name of project / initiative

Community Hubs

Overview

Prior to reunification, community hubs were a feature of probation provision to low and medium risk individuals as part of the legacy CRC delivery model. Since reunification we have recognised a number of positives which we wanted to retain so we have kept the model within the PDU. We currently have three community hubs across the area, two in church halls and one in a community centre, which we hire one or two days a week as required. The hubs are staffed by probation practitioners to work in an integrated way with representatives from partner agencies to promote a “one stop shop” approach whereby people on probation can meet their supervising officer and get the wrap-around support they might need.

Longevity

We have been operating the hubs since 2020 (but they were part of the legacy CRC's operating model for a number of years before that).

Benefits

As set out in by HMiP in their report: *The Role of the Community Hubs in Helping to Deliver Probation Services and Support Desistance* we see many advantages to this way of working. Community hubs are friendlier and much less formal environments than probation offices, are generally more local to the people we are supervising, and provide a chance for them to link in with other agencies in the same place, without needing to travel on elsewhere. We have also seen an increase in compliance among our target group.

Uniqueness

We believe we are one of the few PDUs with such geographically dispersed infrastructure, in what is the largest PDU in the North East region, to operate this model.

Applicability

This model is applicable for probation delivery across the country – as was the case prior to reunification, when low and medium risk offenders were the responsibility of CRCs.

Requirements

There are few obvious bars to wider adoption of this approach. It does require suitable venues which can be hired to host the hubs, although the cost of these can be kept low and they are outweighed by the benefits.

For more information:

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See also: <https://bit.ly/community-hubs> [HMiP report]

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