

Castington embraces new approach to sentence management



Case study: Implementing eAsset at HMP and YOI Castington

“eAsset is really bringing everything together for us at Castington, and I am convinced it will mean better outcomes for young people. With YOTs’ assessments now linking directly into our own intervention planning, our approach has become more comprehensive. The more young people who leave us and don’t return, the greater our job satisfaction, so working in the Prison Service is becoming more rewarding every day.”

Alex Tait, Governor of HMP and YOI Castington



Staff at HMP and YOI Castington in the North East region recently implemented the eAsset sentence management system, and are now proud advocates of its structured approach to risk-led sentence management.

“It’s all about better outcomes,” says Head of Offender Management Neil Gibson, describing the changes that eAsset has brought about at HMP and YOI Castington. “Relations

between staff are more logical and joined-up, processes are more streamlined, and there is now total focus on the young person’s needs. The profile of the units has definitely changed for the better.”

And he’s not alone in his view. Staff in nearly all teams including reception, induction, casework, education, healthcare and resettlement report positive effects of the new system. “eAsset has

enabled all of us to understand each other’s jobs better and appreciate the pressures we face,” says Administrator Gavin Hitchinson. Senior Officer Tracey French, who formerly worked at the much smaller HMP Cookham Wood, anticipates that all establishments will benefit, whatever their size. “eAsset simply addresses so many practical issues,” she says.

Castington: key facts

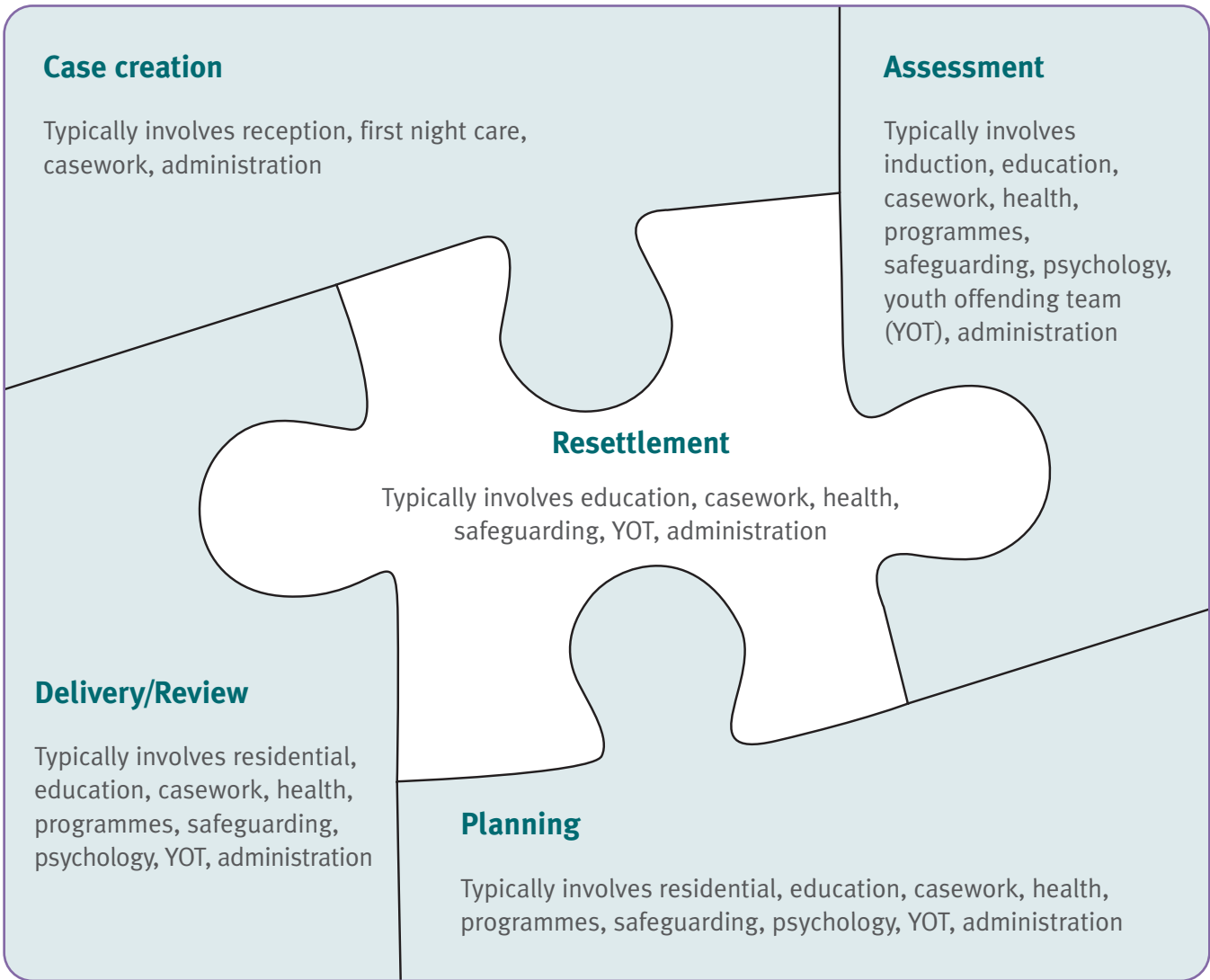
Castington is a closed Young Offenders Institution (YOI) in Northumberland, accommodating 128 sentenced and unsentenced 15 to 17-year-old young people and 40 15 to 17-year-old section 91 trainees. It is a split site, which also caters for 120 sentenced and 120 unsentenced 18 to 21-year-old offenders.

The Young People’s Unit is supported by a multi-disciplinary team made up of prison officers and administrative staff and specialists in casework, substance misuse, education, healthcare, PE, safeguarding and chaplaincy.

eAsset went live at Castington in April 2007. Seven lead practitioners and 187 staff were trained in using the system itself, and 36 in risk-led sentence management.

eAsset sentence management

eAsset is an electronic sentence management system that brings together risk assessment information about the young person, facilitating end-to-end sentence management, from reception through to resettlement.



Successful transition

Transition from a paper-based system of sentence planning to eAsset begins with the Business Change Team spending time with staff in order to gain a detailed understanding of current working practices – from initial reception activities, right through to community resettlement. Having understood and documented how the component parts of the establishment fit together, the team then look for ways of streamlining processes and increasing efficiency.

The next stage is to customise eAsset to ensure that it supports the establishment's staff in delivering integrated sentence planning. A key element here is ensuring that all staff receive requisite training in risk-led sentence management, and in how the system supports their everyday work.

Supportive training

eAsset went live at Castington in April 2007, after a 12-week business change initiative to convert the establishment to a single casework model for sentence planning. The Business Change Team, headed by Phil Boardman of the Wiring Up Youth Justice programme, worked closely with the governor and staff to provide training for 187 staff in just three weeks.

As it turned out, training was the key. Some staff had expressed doubts about the scale of change, but the team made sure that support and training was targeted at those who needed it most. Principal Officer Martin Dajoux found the Business Change Team enormously supportive: “The training they gave enabled us to start experiencing benefits immediately, which provided incentive in itself,” he says.

A significant factor was the operational knowledge of some of the trainers, according to Neil Gibson. “Jonathan Ingham and Samantha Kinder both came with experience of working in the secure estate, so they knew how our staff think – this really helped them address our needs effectively.”

Regular meetings kept staff up to date, and the training was made as flexible as possible to suit individual needs. “They solved our business and technical problems quickly, and there was strong support even after the implementation,” says Gavin Hitchinson. “The team’s collaborative and helpful style

ensured that we all made swift progress.” Before leaving Castington at the end of the successful training programme, the Business Change Team set up a helpdesk so that staff would continue to get support.



Photo posed by models

Implementing eAsset – the stages

Weeks 1–3			Weeks 4–12 and ongoing		
1. Ensuring the active support of senior managers and building a joint team at the establishment	2. Completing a landscape assessment of the site: training needs, IT requirements and cases to be migrated	3. Developing a site-specific training plan for both risk-led sentence planning and the eAsset application itself	5. Delivering training, so staff can start using the eAsset system and migrating cases	6. Supporting staff in adapting to new ways of working as they switch over to eAsset sentence management	7. Secure establishment making sure that the change is embedded and that the benefits are realised
4. Working to analyse current business processes and refining them to ensure more effective sentence management					

Significant benefits

eAsset effectively makes the caseworker the hub of information from multiple sources, including residential, education, healthcare, safeguarding and substance misuse. As Tracey French explains: “This is often the most vulnerable time for a youngster, and having just one person to look to for support can make all the difference. eAsset has made intervention planning much more detailed and personalised, and therefore more realistic.”

Another significant benefit has been the creation of dedicated casework teams. This has enabled staff to give more support to difficult youngsters, and to change their behavioural management strategy. “Teams are able to tackle young people’s needs much more promptly and consistently than before,” says Tracey.

eAsset has also had the effect of bringing Castington into closer relationship with the YOTs (some

of which have already come on fact-finding visits). Training has made Castington staff take more account of *Assets* in general, and some teams have improved their own business processes with gate-keeping and quality assessment methods.

Neil Gibson draws a parallel with the successful implementation of Electronic Yellow Envelope (Eye) which went live in the North East region in May this year. “As with eAsset, Eye has allowed us to do things much better,” he says. “Our reception staff are now properly informed before the young person arrives, so we can meet their needs much better and share information with the other teams.” It is no coincidence that the rate of ‘no docs’ for Castington dropped in May 2007 to just one, from an average of 12 to 14 in the same period in 2006.

The eAsset effect

The introduction of eAsset has given rise to a single, shared view of every young person’s case, which

is accessible to all staff and accurately represents the entire stay in custody. Whether the young person goes back into the community or transfers to the young adult estate, that information is available and ready for transfer.

In the short time since implementation, eAsset has more than proved itself, and the staff at Castington are looking forward to the other developments under the Wiring Up Youth Justice programme. Gavin Hitchinson sums up the eAsset effect: “Put simply, it has helped bring us together as a team.”

Electronic Yellow Envelope at Castington: the benefits

- Reception staff are receiving all information in electronic format via Secure eMail before the young person arrives. This means planning and assessment can start earlier, giving the young person the best possible start.
- Information is more relevant and complete, allowing staff to do more to reduce the risk of vulnerable young people harming themselves or others.
- Because most of the paper work can be done before the young person arrives, staff can spend more time working with them rather than filling in forms.
- In the longer term, risk information will be transferred directly from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) Placements Team to eAsset.

How to prepare for eAsset implementation

- facilitate an engagement meeting between the Business Change Team and the governor as early as possible
- identify a site lead manager as early as possible
- go on a fact-finding visit to a site where eAsset is already in use
- identify lead practitioners as early as possible (with the guidance of the Business Change Team)
- decide on 'rewards' for lead practitioners
- begin to consider an optimum casework model for the establishment
- where possible, attend training in risk-led sentence management (perhaps at another site) before implementation
- allocate workspace for the team
- arrange access and keys
- book training venue for the 12-week period.

eAsset and Wiring Up Youth Justice

eAsset is a sentence management system for children and young people in the secure estate, created with the participation of HM Prison Service, the National Offender Management Service and the YJB. It uses the YOT's *Asset* assessment for initial sentence planning and allows the information to be constantly updated throughout the stay in custody.

The Wiring Up Youth Justice programme is rolling out eAsset to all secure establishments between 2007 and 2009 as part of a broader programme to bring together all parts of the youth justice system and create end-to-end case management for the first time.

Business Change Team members



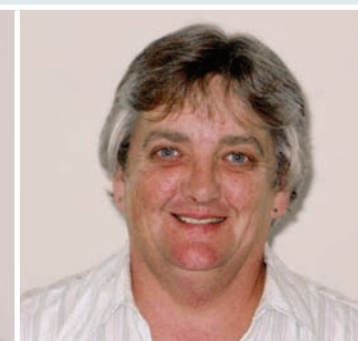
Phil Boardman has worked on the development of eAsset for the past four years, having previously been Head of Juveniles at HMP Hindley. Phil is currently Business Change Manager for the secure estate.



Steve Turner joined the eAsset team this April as Transition Manager for YOIs. He previously worked as Governor in the Operations and Security Department at HMYOI Glen Parva.



Chris Jenkins worked as an Administrative Officer for the Women and Young People's Group, before moving to his current role as Business Support Officer for the Business Change Team.



Jackie Evans was an eAsset Administrator at HMYOI Lancaster Farms from April 2004 until she joined the Business Change Team as Business Support Officer.

For further information about the
Wiring Up Youth Justice programme
go to www.wiringupyouthjustice.info
or email wiringup@yjb.gov.uk.

Wiring Up Youth Justice Case Study No. 1
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