



# oracle

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## Outstanding at Oracle!

2010/11 has been the fifth year of operation for Oracle and we are delighted to see our progress and the achievements of our young people recognised by two of our homes and one of our schools receiving outstanding reports from our regulator.

Two of Oracle's homes were judged by Ofsted as "outstanding" in 2010/11:



Epworth House in region 1 achieved "outstanding" in its key inspection on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010 and retained this judgement in its most recent inspection, on 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011, which

was conducted by a different inspector. Well deserved for Kerry Procter and her team at Epworth.



Robin House in region 2 achieved its "outstanding" judgement in its key inspection on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and again in its random on 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011. Result of a fantastic team effort

lead by Emma Parsons, whose dedication and commitment as a manager helped to go the extra mile.

All other homes at Oracle continue to retain "good" overall judgments, Making Oracle's homes 100% good or outstanding, across the board, reflecting the high quality of the resources and the effective service delivered.

Oracle School, Congleton: excerpt taken verbatim from the evaluation section from the published inspection report conducted by Ofsted on 1st & 2nd December 2010:

### Evaluation of the school

"Oracle School provides an outstanding quality of education and therapy; this is instrumental in helping pupils to control their behaviour, take learning seriously, and make good progress. The curriculum is outstanding, being broad and tailored exceptionally well to meet the severe and highly specific needs of each pupil. Teaching is outstanding and is supported by an exemplary range of assessment techniques, some of which are innovatory".

The full report can be viewed on Oracle's website via the download in the education section by following link:

<http://www.oraclecare.com/education.html>

The report recognises the benefits of the tripartite integration of education, care and therapy that is central to Oracle's success in helping young people achieve. Jo Ingram (lead teacher in region 1) was instrumental in leading her teaching team to achieve this but it is also due to the wider team, headed up by Steve Bromley (Director of Education and Head Teacher) and senior colleagues Nicky Mosson-Jones (Clinical Director) and Tom Mayer (Operations Director and RI) that have driven this forward, overseeing the tripartite integration across Oracle on a senior level (more about the developments in Oracle's structure in the section of this newsletter, "responding to change").



### In this issue:

- Outstanding at Oracle!
- Case studies
- Music Workshops in Region 2
- Free training for local authority practitioners
- Responding to change



# Case studies and music workshop

## Case study 1: HA

### Initial Assessment

Client HA was assessed by Social Services as being at high risk within her family environment because of a combination of significant social deprivation and isolation together with emotional and physical neglect, and poor boundaries around sexual relationships from the adults in the family. At the point Oracle became involved with HA she presented with extremely poor interpersonal skills – she had been described as an “elective mute” by one professional involved in her referral and poor levels of personal care and hygiene. HA also exhibited high levels of aggression and violence as a result of her ineffective emotion regulation and her inability to manage social relationships.

### Oracle approach

Commencing with her arrival, Oracle built up a programme of development for HA's social skills and of gradual exposure to an extended range of activities, including participation in education. Our tri-partite therapeutic approach, with all three specialist Oracle services working towards a shared integrated development plan, prioritised relationship building, nurture, and supporting HA to develop self awareness and exert her personal choice.

HA attended the Oracle school and was immediately immersed in the school community – HA's attendance record at Oracle's school has been close to 100%. Our residential care workers developed very strong relationships with HA and engaged HA in activities she had previously been isolated from eg shopping, using public transport, and attending, eventually, Girl Guides and youth groups. They encouraged her to exert personal choice. With weekly sessions, our therapists worked on developing HA's thinking skills and critical reasoning, and supported her to develop her self-awareness and personal identity.

### Outcome

The positive change in HA has been considerable. HA now makes decisions around her own well being, she is aware of and able to maintain her personal care and hygiene, and she is an active participant in choices and decisions about her own future. She also understands why and how it is important to protect herself and make herself safe. HA attends an external college studying animal care and she continues to exhibit strong self-confidence and self-esteem. Significantly, HA has developed a sense of self-worth, and has found her voice!

## Case study 2: NL

### Initial Assessment

An Oracle Consultant was engaged by the local authority to undertake a court assessment of NL following charges of sexual offending. Our assessment indicated that NL presented a high risk of sexually harmful behaviour towards young girls, displayed a number of challenging behaviours, and that his risks were underpinned by the fact his basic thinking processes were very limited due to learning difficulties, and a fundamental lack of understanding of cause and effect.

Despite the serious offences, the court followed Oracle's recommendations that NL could be safely managed in the community in a highly supervised environment which could work directly with his offending behaviour. NL was given a community sentence, placed on the Sex Offender Register, and subsequently admitted to Oracle's specialist residential service.

We started our work with him at Oracle when he was 14 years old, moving him to our Congleton base and away from his home.

### Oracle approach

NL's case was closely supervised and monitored under MAPPA, and Oracle worked in partnership with criminal justice and social care agencies to manage and reduce NL's risk of reoffending.

Due to NL's core learning difficulties our approach at the beginning was to focus on developing his mental processes, and addressing educational deficiencies such as basic literacy. It was clear that other work would have little long-term impact until NL's foundation skills in these areas had improved. The integrated therapeutic approach by all 3 strands of the Oracle service was to encourage NL to reflect on his own thoughts, to evaluate the impact of his actions on the wider world, and seek out opportunities to reinforce the core literacy and numeracy skills. Oracle's care professionals also worked closely with NL on independence training and his personal care and hygiene – these significantly improved over time.

During his 3 1/2 years at Oracle we helped NL develop a basic level of critical reasoning. As he developed his reasoning skills, NL began to understand some of his behavioural triggers and improve his impulse control. He was then able to engage in direct work with an Oracle therapist targeting his offending cycles, and building relapse prevention strategies – gradually the risks NL presented in the community lessened.

When NL left Oracle's school at 16 we were able to access further education through a local college.

### Outcome

At the age of 18, together with the local authority team, Oracle supported NL's return to his original home area. We produced a transition plan for NL taking him from residential care to independent living and provided a constantly diminishing level of outreach support during this period.

NL is now living independently and back in the community in his home area.

## Music workshops in Region 2

It was Martin Luther King who once dared to dream of changes and started a revolution. I too have dared to dream, but may not have started as big a revolution... yet! I have dreamt of an Oracle care that provides young people with an access to music, where our young people are free to express themselves through the medium of music, where our young people are given opportunities that else where they would not receive.

With this in thought, I decided to embark on a quest. A quest to share a passion of mine with our young people, and alas, I came up with the idea to teach the young people how to use turntables (with 'old fashioned' 12" vinyl's) and how to be a DJ. Recently I have been teaching the young people in region 1 some of the basic skills required to be a DJ. This has included introducing the young people to the idea of beat matching (having two songs playing at the same time to the same beats per minute), mixing sounds (high frequency sounds and low frequency sounds and how these can be controlled to mix songs fluidly) and mixing songs from one turntable to another, keeping a continuous beat flowing.

I have been teaching the young people the art of 'turntablism' using the genres of Drum and Bass and Dubstep. For those not in the know, these are two of the biggest genres of dance music in the UK music scene. These sounds have recently been dripping into the mainstream with acts such as Pendulum and Magentic Man being some of the biggest selling artists of recent years. I hope to inspire some of your young people to be the next big thing in electronic music.

The young people have showed some good potential and picked up some of the techniques quickly. I have also been teaching some of them how to set up the equipment. This also has allowed the young people to show promise and potential. In the coming months I am looking to develop the techniques that I have shown the young people and teach them how to use more complicated bits of equipment. I am also looking to show some of the young people how to make electronic music. If the young people continue to impress, I will be looking into getting them the opportunity to play out in front of other people, showing off the skills they have learned thus far. For the young people involved with the project so far, I would like to thank them for their efforts and congratulate them on the level of ability they have achieved. Watch this space; we may have a star to take on the world from Oracle!

# Free training for local authority practitioners

## 1. Understanding psychosexual development and its relevance to sexually harmful behaviour by children and adolescents.

**Dates:** Thursday 10th March 2011 (Congleton) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs  
Thursday 24th March 2011 (Bedford) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs

### Aims of the session

- To explore the pathways of healthy and maladaptive sexual development.
- To examine age appropriate, risk-relevant interventions.
- To assist professionals in their decision making processes with this population group.
- To help practitioners in their differentiation of what is developmentally normal, natural and of concern.

### Who is it for?

Social workers, teachers, psychologists, CAMHS professionals

## 2. Working in a residential setting with young people who have a history of displaying sexually harmful behaviours.

**Dates:** Wednesday 11th May 2011 (Bedford) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs  
Tuesday 31st May 2011 (Congleton) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs

### Aims of the session

- Explore some of the complexities of creating a setting conducive to meet the needs of young people whilst balancing potential risk challenges.
- To promote a healthy attitude towards helping this population group.
- To examine methods of working to reduce risk by therapy, diversion and skill development.

### Who is it for?

Residential care workers, care managers, social workers, psychologists and therapists.

## 3. Contextualising risk of physical and sexual aggression; informed decision making processes for casework practitioners.

**Dates:** Thursday 16th June 2011 (Bedford) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs  
Thursday 23rd June 2011 (Congleton) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs

### Aims of the session

- To discuss concepts of risk
- To create a framework for evidence-based decision making.
- To explore some of the challenges and dilemmas facing those charged with managing risk.
- To examine a range of structured risk tools and practice that assist in the assessment of community-based risk.

### Who is it for?

Social workers and juvenile justice workers. This is an introductory level seminar to offer opportunities to explore risk and how impacts upon decision making.

## 4. Young people who have learning difficulties and present sexually harmful behaviour patterns – development of safe relationships.

**Dates:** Thursday 22nd Sept 2011 (Bedford) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs  
Thursday 06th Oct 2011 (Congleton) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs

### Aims of the session

- To contextualise the notion of risk and its association with learning/cognitive ability.
- To explore methods of working to enhance skills, social relationships and individual wellbeing.
- To explore individual case studies of group participants

### Who is it for?

For all practitioners working in this field working in community or residential settings.

## 5. Assessing risk of sexual and physical harm; refining the process of effective management.

**Dates:** Thursday 10th Nov 2011 (Bedford) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs  
Thursday 17th Nov 2011 (Congleton) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs

### Aims of the session

- To provide a basic overview of sexual offending aetiology, typology and recidivism relevance.
- To look at the concept of risk and how risks can be managed in a structured process.
- To appraise various risk assessment tools to facilitate a more collaborative approach to risk assessment.
- To evaluate case scenarios of risk to highlight how practice can be further refined to enhance future risk management in child safeguarding cases.

### Who is it for?

For case managers, commissioners, psychologists, CAMHS practitioners, residential practitioners.

## 6. Meeting the educational needs of young people with complex behavioural challenges – a model of integrated practice which enhances the whole person.

**Dates:** Thursday 24th Nov 2011 (Bedford) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs  
Tuesday 29th Nov 2011 (Congleton) 10.30hrs – 15.00hrs

### Aims of the session

- To disseminate a model of integrative working
- To explore theoretical and practical application of methodology
- To explore participants' experiences and challenges, providing scope to share good practice in respect to 'what works'.

### Who is it for?

Teachers from mainstream and special educational settings.

**BOOKING DETAILS:** to request a booking form call us on **0870 850 2949** or email [info@oraclecare.com](mailto:info@oraclecare.com). Please note that each seminar is repeated in each Oracle region. For bespoke requests please contact Pat Walsh on **0870 850 2949** or email [info@oraclecare.com](mailto:info@oraclecare.com)





## Responding to change:

Oracle Care was established in late 2005 and commenced operating in April 2006, with the registration of our first home and admission of our first placement. Since then, Oracle has worked with 29 individual young people across 20 different placing authorities.

The "Oracle Model" (see our website [http://www.oraclecare.com/oracle\\_model.html](http://www.oraclecare.com/oracle_model.html)) illustrates our original concept of integration across 3 key dimensions of each young person's placement plan; residential care, therapy and education. As Oracle has evolved and developed, we have extended the work on integration through strengthening and empowering our residential, teaching and clinical teams and increasing the focus on integrated working at all levels of the organisation:

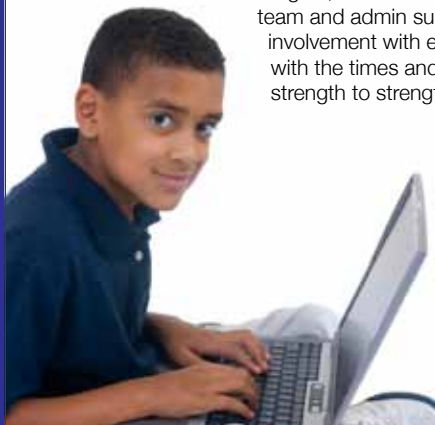
- i. Senior Tripartite Team – entire service, inter-regional overview
- ii. RMTs (Regional Management Teams) – main focus is each specific region (1 & 2)
- iii. TEC (Therapy Education & Care Teams) – focus on young people – overview of each
- iv. Case Management Meetings – really detailed (2 hours) on each individual young person

In order to respond to the changing needs of the organisation, and also with consideration to the demands of the sector and the effects of the comprehensive spending review, Oracle has implemented some structural changes to support our service and simultaneously fulfil our commitment to disseminating good practice by offering free training seminars to practitioners working for local authorities. As such, **Steve Gray's** role has shifted slightly, enabling him to take on a more "specialist" role, offering consultancy to local authorities in relation to non-residential cases and offering a rolling programme of free\* training seminars (which Oracle will produce certificates of attendance for PRTL evidence purposes) across both Oracle's regions; this is part of Oracle's commitment to "give something back" to the sector by sharing its inherent expertise with other professionals in related fields (CAMHS, Youth Justice, Children's Social Care and Education, etc). In order to accommodate this change, Steve relinquished his role as "Responsible Individual" in April 2010, with **Tom Mayer** stepping into this role. Tom is now approaching his first anniversary as RI and also heads up QA, having taken over the reins from **Alison Trainor** during 2010. Steve's role as CEO continues, although this is now shared with **Ravi Maheswaren** (Finance Director), a move that has further released Steve to focus on his specialist consultancy role.

**Nicky Mosson-Jones** (Clinical Director) takes the lead on Clinical Governance and is primarily responsible for driving the tripartite integration across Oracle, in conjunction with **Steve Bromley** (Education Director/Head Teacher) and **Tom Mayer** (Operations Director/Responsible Individual). These 3 heads of department meet regularly for senior tripartite meetings and since Jan 2011 oversee the daily running of Oracle and maintaining/driving up standards across the service.

Behind this focal team are the important people; the therapists, registered managers, residential staff, teachers, teaching assistants, HR, referrals team and admin support. At every level, there is integration and involvement with each other and our young people. We are all moving with the times and learning from each other as Oracle goes from strength to strength. Come visit us and see for yourself!

(\*free to practitioners and professionals employed in the public sector. Course fees may apply to other applicants.)



Young person feedback on Oracle music workshops (see page 2):

"I found the DJing fun and interesting because it was different and a new way to connect with the inner me. It's away to get all your anger out cause you can express your feelings and express who you are and be loud. I would like to do more of it because it's something to look for would to and it's fun plus you get to it differently every time you do it!!"

*LF, aged 14, female day pupil, Oracle School*

