

# Youth Justice Plan Summary 2008/2009

Sunderland Youth Offending Service

## Forward

As chair of the Sunderland Youth Offending Service (YOS) Management Board, I am pleased to introduce the Summary Youth Justice Plan 2008/2009.

Following on from the successful outcome of inspection by the national Joint Inspection Team, Sunderland YOS Partnership has had another successful year. Sunderland YOS has again achieved the highest performance level rating in the national performance tables (one of only 8 Youth Offending Teams [YOTs] to achieve a level 5 performance rating from 156 YOTs nationally) and through working in partnership with others, Sunderland City Council and its partners have achieved Beacon status for reducing re-offending across both youth and adults. Our track record of **reducing custodial sentencing** (National Indicator 43) and maintaining this at well below the national Youth Justice Board (YJB) target was identified as an exemplar of best practice by the Beacon authority. In 2008/2009 we will continue to have a range of intensive programmes in place such as the ISSP scheme, RAP and the Revolving Door Project, ensuring high levels of intervention with the most persistent and serious young offenders. We are confident that our improvement plans as set out in this Youth Justice Plan will ensure continuous improvement in

2008/2009 and that Sunderland YOS will continue to deliver on performance outcomes for children and young people.

Our ambition is for a **safe city** in which everyone will be and feel safe and secure. Our ambition as a YOS is to ensure that the **public is protected** from the harm caused by a minority of children and young people who offend, that those children and young people who are vulnerable are effectively **safeguarded** and that the Every Child Matters outcomes are achieved for all children who come into contact with Sunderland YOS. In 2008/2009 our focus is on continuing to drive up the quality of assessment as the foundation for effective intervention planning, delivery and review. Our principal aim is to **prevent offending and re-offending** and to therefore achieve demonstrable reductions in First-Time Entrants (FTEs - National Indicator 111) to the criminal justice system and to achieve reductions in re-offending for those who do offend (National Indicator 19). The inclusion of the latter national indicator in the Local Area Agreement demonstrates that continuing to achieve reductions in youth offending is a priority for Sunderland.

As a public service we recognise the need to achieve **value for money** in the services we deliver and thus

performance management and financial probity remain at the top of the agenda for the governing YOS Management Board. As a significant partnership for the city, the Sunderland YOS Management Board continues to have the full commitment of partners and strong links with other significant partnerships including the Safer Sunderland Partnership (Crime Reduction Partnership) and the Children's Trust.

We are committed to **equality** in provision across our service to meet diverse needs and will work with partners to ensure there continues to be no difference in the ethnic composition of young people in the local youth justice system compared with the local population (National Indicator 44).

As a Beacon authority we look forward to sharing our best practice with others and in doing so hope we can learn from others too as we continuously strive to improve services to children and young people, their parents/carers and families, victims of youth crime and the wider public.



Dr Helen Paterson  
Director of Children's Services  
Chair, Youth Offending Service  
Management Board

## Introduction

Sunderland YOS is a multi-agency service that works with Northumbria Police, National Probation Service, Teaching Primary Care Trust, Sunderland Housing Group, Sunderland City Council and other partners. The principle aim of the service is to prevent offending by children and young people. The service works with young people between the ages of 10 to 17 years, their families and relevant professionals to:

- Assist with young people who, because of alleged or actual offending, have become involved in the Criminal Justice System
- Prevent offending by children and young people by working with those at risk.

The Youth Justice Plan is the primary document for the service to set out how youth justice services will be delivered in the area; how the service will deliver against the YJB's performance management framework and is a key source for local planning.

This summary outlines the key priorities, themes and performance measures for the YOS, as detailed in the Youth Justice Plan 2008/2009.

## Achievements

2007/2008 has been another successful year for Sunderland YOS with further awards for innovation and practice and sustained performance against the YJB's Performance Framework; culminating in the prestigious Beacon award for the YOS's ability to deliver innovative, award winning and nationally recognised approaches to criminal justice.

In awarding the YOS this status, the Beacon Council said **"Sunderland has demonstrated improved outcomes on youth offending, and against the national trend, the rate of custody for young offenders has dropped from 12 per cent in 1999 to a current figure of 2.8 per cent, with no negative impact on levels of offending. This has been achieved through tackling issues such as access to accommodation and mental health services...the authority has demonstrated innovative actions for both adult and young offenders, and a willingness to re-shape services to meet the needs of service users."**

Other awards include Alarm Risk Management Award, Youth Justice Award and Monitor Excellence Award.

## National Priorities

National priorities have been set for all YOTs and Sunderland YOS has detailed plans for how it will deliver against the themes over the year ahead:

- Reduce first-time entrants into the youth justice system
- Reduce proven re-offending by children and young people
- Reduce the use of youth custodial remands and sentences
- Address risk of serious harm to the public through local application of YJB risk of serious harm procedures
- Keep children and young people safe from harm
- Improve public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of dealing with youth crime in the Criminal Justice System
- Improve satisfaction in the Criminal Justice System for those who have been victims of youth crime.



YOS with Beacon officials

## National Performance Measures

In 2008/2009 the performance framework for YOTs nationally has been reduced to a smaller set of six key outcome areas which are included in the National Indicator set for local authorities (198 indicators):

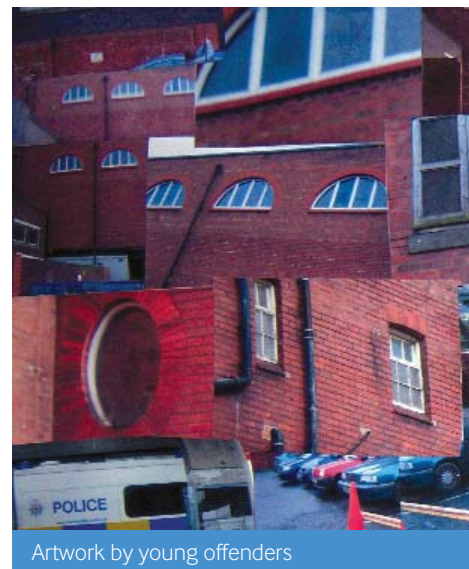
- **NI 19 Recidivism** - Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders
- **NI 43 Use of Custody** - Young people within the Youth Justice System receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody
- **NI 44 Diversity** - Ethnic composition of offenders on Youth Justice System disposals
- **NI 45 Education, Training and Employment** - Young offenders engagement in suitable education, employment or training
- **NI 46 Accommodation** - Young offenders access to suitable accommodation
- **NI 111 First Time Entrants** – FTEs to Youth Justice System aged 10-17.

Narional Indicator 19 for Recidivism is a key priority incorporated into the Sunderland Local Area Agreement.

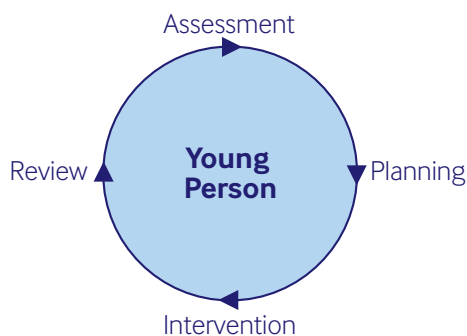
## Local Priorities

Our local priorities for 2008/2009 are:

- **Prevention of offending and re-offending** and in particular intervening early to prevent the escalation of offending
- **Assessment** as the foundation to effective service planning and delivery
- **Risk Management** to manage offender risks of re-offending, harm to others and vulnerability/safeguarding
- **Engagement** as the key to achieving behaviour change with robust enforcement arrangements for those who refuse to comply.



Underpinning our key priorities is an emphasis on **evaluation and review** with strong performance management arrangements to ensure the achievement of outcomes. Our priorities are also underpinned by a commitment to developing our workforce and innovation in practice as a learning organisation.



victim and public confidence in the youth justice service. As a service we intend to deliver high quality assessments, effectively manage risk, identify and address safeguarding issues, intervene early, engage young people, their families and communities and involve victims. We will maintain strong information management and quality assurance processes in order to support our ability to continually develop and improve the services we deliver.

Our priorities are aimed at achieving our over-arching outcome areas of reducing the numbers of children and young people entering the criminal justice system (National Indicator 111 – FTEs) and reducing re-offending by children and young people (National Indicator 19 – Rate of Proven Re-offending). We will support the delivery of safe and effective custody through working with partners to achieve effective end-to-end case management for those young people receiving a custodial sentence. We will also work alongside partners to increase

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