

Welcome to the 12th edition of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) newsletter

For staff, colleagues and service users to update you on what's been happening in the service, since our last newsletter in March 2008. Your contributions to future newsletters would be very welcome.

Details of how to contact us are on the back page.

We hope you enjoy this edition.

In this edition we:

- Look at the new planning and performance requirements
- Talk about Beacon and what it means for Sunderland
- Award successes at the workforce conference
- Learn to cook, sail a ship and visit the Lake District
- Celebrate the achievements of volunteers and young people

YOS Board - 'Agenda for Planning and Performance'

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) are rolling out major changes to the Planning and Performance Framework for Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). Within this new framework the requirements for National Standards, Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and the Youth Justice Plan have been revised.

From April 2008 YJB KPI's have been incorporated into the National Indicator set of 198 performance indicators for Local Authorities.

The 12 previous KPI's have been reduced to six National Indicators. These are:

- Recidivism
- Use of Custody
- Diversity
- ETE
- Accommodation
- First Time Entrants

Targets for the indicators will be set locally as opposed to in previous years where the YJB have set National Targets for all YOTs.

The National Indicator for Recidivism has also been prioritised as part of the Local Authority Agreement as a key indicator for the City.

Simultaneously, the new look Youth Justice Plan uses a focused problem solving approach by drawing on local data and evidence in order to identify areas of improvement in 2008/2009. This plan will be published in August 2008.

Finally proposed changes to National Standards in conjunction with the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill, bring about specific responsibilities for the YOS Management Board, including:

- Securing appropriate representation at the Board
- Effective planning, underpinned by analysis of asset and risk
- Resourcing and providing the infrastructure for the YOT
- Overseeing staff secondment arrangements
- Ensuring the YOT has sufficient access to mainstream services
- Ensuring lines of accountability to other governance structures
- Ensuring clearance to deviate from any National Standard and monitoring an action to re-instate it



YOS Board

Community Payback at Hylton Castle

Sunderland YOS Community Payback Scheme is a programme of work that enables young people who have offended to put something back into their local community and repair the costs of their offending.

Over the last few months a number of young people supervised by the YOS have visited Hylton Castle and its surrounding local nature reserve Hylton Dene to complete various reparative activities including litter picking, gardening and conservation work.



As well as restoring the costs of their offending behaviour in the local community, the project has helped the young people to learn more about this historical site and the importance of protecting areas of local natural beauty.

Maurice Bates, Hylton Dene Project Officer said: **“It’s important to keep the area clean and tidy for the local wildlife and community. Activities such as this with Sunderland Youth Offending Service helps to build respect for local areas”.**

Peer Mentoring Project

Sunderland YOS is currently piloting a Peer Mentoring Project which explores the benefits of using young adults as mentors to younger children.

Research has shown that in schools and colleges this approach has worked well and as a service we believe that similar success can be achieved with young people who have offended or are at risk of offending.

In February 2008 the five volunteer peer mentors (largely recruited from City of Sunderland College and other sources) and the mentoring team attended a two day residential training

Volunteers shadow Restorative Justice and Community Payback



A young person completing Reparation

schemes

A number of YOS volunteers have recently had the opportunity to shadow the work undertaken by the Restorative Justice (RJ) Team and Community Payback schemes.

The volunteers Ashleigh Smith, John Hunter, Barbara Adams and Nicola Temple shadowed RJ workers until they themselves were able to supervise restorative justice work, community payback schemes and one-to-one direct reparation.

All volunteers who were involved in this exercise undertook the role as part of their own personal progression and have subsequently been interviewed and appointed as paid sessional employees within the YOS.

Ashleigh Smith who is now a sessional worker first became a volunteer two years ago. Ashleigh worked alongside the Mentoring Team for one year before joining the RJ Team and became a volunteer because she wanted to help young people. She believes **“working directly with the young people helps me keep my feet firmly on the ground.”**

Ashleigh states that **“many of the young children I supervise during reparation think that they don’t have any chance of a future. Part of my role is to try to explain to the young people that completing reparation allows them to give something back to the community.”**

course at Derwent Hill Outdoor Activity Centre with the support of Aim Higher.

The aims of the training were twofold. Firstly to equip the volunteers with the skills and knowledge they needed for their new roles and secondly to observe how the volunteers interacted with a group of young people who attended for the second day of training.

The process was extremely successful and since the completion of training the volunteers have been matched with young people, four of the three month relationships have recently begun.

Young people take to the sea



Shipmates aboard the yacht, James Cook

The Wear Kids' 'Looked After' Team recently provided eight looked after young people with the chance to participate in a fantastic life changing experience.

After months of planning, the group (together with a Prevention Officer and Residential Child Worker) travelled to Holland by ferry. Where, they would get the opportunity to

experience the thrills and challenges of hands-on blue-water sailing on the Bruinisse waterways aboard the Ocean Youth Trust (NE) yacht, James Cook.

Over the course of three days spent on the James Cook, the young people learned various ship functions such as how to operate the sails, steer the yacht, identify dangers, understand the laws of the water ways, tie knots, mooring up and casting off.

In addition to harnessing these skills, group sessions during the voyage enabled some young people to identify the potential offending behaviours within them and how to overcome personal hurdles. The young people supported each other throughout this process and became a very tightly formed team.

Along the way, the journey took them to the Netherlands Province and Zeeland, where the young people sampled the Dutch culture.

Some of the young people who were fortunate enough to take part commented that the experience had made them look at their lives and the direction they were taking and gave them the opportunity to reflect on the changes they have made and those they would like to make in their lives.

Next generation recruitment

A group of ten young people were recently given an insight into the recruitment and selection process of staff within Children's Services.

Organised by the prevention service, the young people were given the chance to take part in role-plays, mock interviews and the design of job advertisements. The weekend residential also involved taking part in the facility's more physically challenging pursuits.

The event was extremely successful and the young people who attended the course provided a valuable insight into what they see as important qualities and skills in staff and how young people can help identify these qualities if involved through the interview process.

As well as the residential weekend the young people involved had also spent an evening a week for four weeks planning the event.

One young person commented **"I have learned new things about the work"** another said **"I really enjoyed [the residential] and it was fun working with different people as a team"**.

Jack Seward, Prevention Team Manager commented on how this activity has benefited the YOS. He said **"This process will allow young people's views to help influence the way our managers recruit in the future"**.



Young people taking to the water at Lakeside

Tackle it – 10 Feet High: An update

In a previous edition of the YOS Newsletter we brought you 'Tackle it – 10 Feet High'. A programme facilitated by Newcastle Eagles Basketball Team, offering basketball coaching to young people. The programme uses sport and positive role models to encourage good citizenship.

The programme has now been extended to Hendon, Sunderland's Back on the Map area.

The programme will run for approximately 20 weeks and it is hoped that parents of the young people participating will also take an active interest in the sessions.

For more information contact the YOS Wear Kid's Team.

What the Beacon Award means for Sunderland YOS



Judith Hay (Head of Positive Contribution and Economic wellbeing), Keith Moore (Deputy Director of Children's Services), Guy Kirk (YOS Manager) with Beacon officials

On 4th March 2008 Sunderland YOS and partners were awarded the prestigious Beacon award for Reducing Re-Offending.

The application process involved a rigorous assessment which looked at the work undertaken across both adult and youth services to reduce re-offending. Sunderland's application included strong evidence helping to demonstrate the improvements that have been made in relation to youth offending.

The status of this award brings with it the responsibility to 'highlight innovative and excellent service provision' as well as the opportunity to learn from others, share ideas and further improve our services.

The Lead Member for Children's Services, the Chief Executive, the Director of Children's Services and Partners of the YOS are all highly committed to the Beacon process and the key responsibilities associated with this.

On 16th May 2008 Guy Kirk, YOS Manager, attended a co-ordinators meeting for the Beacon Reducing Re-offending Theme. The meeting was an opportunity for the Beacon Council to share their expectations with local authorities.

As a Beacon Authority we will:

- Appoint a Beacon Co-ordinator as the contact point for Sunderland
- Publish case studies and other materials from which others can learn about our work to reduce re-offending
- Launch our Beacon learning at a major event to be held in Autumn 2008
- Showcase reducing re-offending learning through national conferences and tailored learning activities
- Host site visits and support others through mentoring

Workforce Conference

On the 20th March 2008 the YOS workforce conference took place at the National Glass Centre. The event was a great opportunity to bring together staff, volunteers, young people and partner agencies.

The Director of Children's Services opened the event by welcoming staff, the YOS Manager talked about the successes of the YOS and what we can do to improve the service further and a YJB representative attended to highlight the national reputation of Sunderland YOS.

Highlights of the day included:

- Entertainment from Gibber Theatre Group who demonstrated their work around alcohol misuse
- An inspiring contribution from a young person working with the YOS – motivating staff in dealing with the challenges they face on a daily basis
- Informal presentations from YOS volunteers who talked about their reasons for becoming involved with the service

A number of staff were awarded by their colleagues under the categories, Doing a great job (Richard Williams), Best piece of work with a young person (Wilf Garbutt), Best supporting role (Brian Robson), Innovation award (Rachel Graham) and Best Colleague (Joanne Banks/Becky Webb).



Brian Robson receiving his award from Graham Robb of the Youth Justice Board

Councillor Pat Smith, Lead Member for Children's Services, attended the evening session to present awards to a number of the services valued volunteers. Almost 60 volunteers received recognition for their services including: Certificate of Achievement for Volunteer Mentors, Award of Excellence for Referral Order volunteers and five years Long Service Awards.

The day was a great success and judging by feedback received, enjoyed by all.

The Bunker Art Exhibition

Sunderland YOS, Resettlement and Aftercare Programme (RAP) is working in partnership with Jungle Bricks Street Art Project, local photographic artist Nicola Maxwell and The Bunker studios. The project aims to equip young people with skills that will help them to secure future education or employment as well as providing them with a hobby and opportunity to learn in a structured environment.

The Bunker, based on Stockton Road, opens its doors to youngsters who are known to the RAP programme giving them the opportunity to express themselves creatively through the media of art and photography.

The Bunker is better known as a professional recording studio that offers a wide range of services to the local music scene including training in industry skills. It has now widened its remit to accommodate more diverse creative projects.

Kenny Sanger of The Bunker believes the drop-in sessions play a vital role in rehabilitating young people who have been in trouble with the police and said: **“This project is free to anyone who is participating in the RAP programme and is on a voluntary basis. This means the young people choose to come here to learn new skills and as a result often choose to avoid their past bad habits. Many of the young people who attend this scheme discover a real passion for art and as a result they begin to think about new directions in life. Without this project many of these young people would not have the support to prevent them from being caught in a cycle of committing crime”.**



Young Person designing a piece of art

One 16-year-old who became disengaged from mainstream education has now decided to pursue a career in art since participating in the project.

He said **“Since I started coming to the Bunker I’ve learnt how to take and develop my own photos and create images using the computer. I can’t wait to see the reaction of my family and friends when they come to the exhibition – I don’t think they’ll believe that it is actually my own work!”**

Gary Roberts, RAP Team Manager states, **“Youths who attend RAP programmes see their confidence soar. They meet new people and discover new things. Once they have been on this scheme they regain their appetite for education or training and we are then able to signpost them towards further education. Crucially, RAP is proving effective in keeping youths out of trouble which, above all else, is the primary purpose of the scheme”.**



Art from the exhibition

On Thursday 3rd April an exhibition took place at Shambles Art Café in Derwent St. The exhibition demonstrated how creative art is helping teenagers who have been in trouble, and who have experienced or been exposed to drug-related problems, to get their lives back on track.

Award for Ministry of YOS

In Issue 10 of the YOS Newsletter we introduced the ‘Ministry of YOS’. A project set up by the RAP Team in partnership with The Bunker with the aim of giving young people the opportunity to develop new skills, form friendships and become part of a group.

During the summer of last year, young people participating in the project produced their own music CD. At The Youth Achievement Awards which took place on 6th March 2008 the ‘Ministry of YOS’ was highly commended in the music category for their CD.



Young person mixing on the decks

On Track Photographic Exhibition



One of the many displays on show at the exhibition

A group of young people from Oxclose Community School have been given the unique opportunity to work alongside On Track and Swing Bridge Video to produce a photographic exhibition entitled 'Good but Misunderstood'.

The exhibition told a story from a young person's point of view about what they've achieved/gained from taking part in the On Track programme by exploring perceptions regarding young people, crime and anti-social behaviour from a young person's stand point.

The 'Good but Misunderstood' photographic exhibition also considered the stereotyping young people may suffer from, when they themselves are also vulnerable to the fears and perceptions regarding crime.

The exhibition was held on 25th March 2008 at Washington Arts Centre, and was formally opened by Guy Kirk, YOS Manager.

One of the young people involved in developing the exhibition commented on the experience: **"I enjoyed the group work, it was very interesting. We learnt how to take photos, use the laptop and sound equipment. I enjoyed taking photos and being in them. We also learnt about crime and how some young people get the blame just because they are teenagers and I don't think that's fair".**

The On Track board game was also launched at the exhibition. The innovative board game is designed to be played with a group of young people and encourages them to consider risk-taking scenarios and the process of appropriate decision-making.

Both the board game and the 'Good but Misunderstood' photo images will be distributed to agencies and local comprehensive schools across Sunderland.

Learning to cook with ISSP

A number of young people have recently been benefiting from the vast cooking skills of members of staff within the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance team (ISSP). The project aims to increase life skills such as budgeting (including choosing best value for money products), healthy eating and providing a service to the community.

Every week four young people have the opportunity to make a meal from scratch which they can then take home for their family. The process starts with the young person choosing the recipe that they would like to cook. They are then supported by their advocate to create a plan, budget and finally buy the required ingredients.

The young people are all keen to help each other and as well as demonstrating pro social modelling this improves their team building skills and helps to increase self esteem.

To date six young people have participated with one young person completing 11 sessions so far. As well as gaining and improving the skills mentioned above the project also forms part of the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award that a number of the young people are completing.

As part of the Duke of Edinburgh award the young people have made scones, cakes and cookies for an elderly group that meet weekly at Hylton Castle Community Centre – all of which have been gratefully received!

It is planned that in the future the project will link into national events such as National Doughnut Day, etc.



A young person preparing a meal

Julie Simpson one of the facilitators of the project said **"Feedback shows the sense of achievement the young people have in producing something the family look forward to eating and in one case a young person who lives independently has a tasty healthy meal which she divides up and freezes to eat throughout the week".**

Duke of Edinburgh Awards

A number of young people who are involved with ISSP have been working towards a Duke of Edinburgh Award with the help and support of the ISSP team. A residential activities weekend took place in February 2008 and as a result of their attendance two young people have now completed all of the necessary elements and will therefore be formally nominated for their Bronze Awards.



Young People on the Duke of Edinburgh Award course

To achieve this they have had to complete a level of commitment in four sections:

- Skills
- Physical Recreation
- Service to the Community
- Expedition

To complete the 'Skills' and 'Service to the Community' sections the young people spent a total of 36 hours each painting and decorating a community building. The 'Physical' section required regular attendance at the gym or ten-pin bowling for 12-weekly sessions which amounted to 18-hours in total. The final element – 'Expedition' was delivered in the residential weekend and involved the young people navigating an 8-mile orienteering challenge in Windermere, supervised but unaided.

The young people aged 15 and 17 years old and considered to be serious offenders are the first to progress to this stage. This is a particular achievement for the 15-year-old who has been excluded from mainstream education due to behavioural problems.

Andy Lamb ISSP practitioner said **"Watching the young people develop as a group over the week was a fantastic experience."**

Getting to Know Victoria Malone



Victoria Malone, Bail and Remand/Court Officer

Victoria Malone, Bail and Remand/Court Officer has recently returned to work from maternity leave. We managed to catch up with Victoria to see how she's been getting on.

What is your role/ official title within the YOS?

Bail and Remand Officer/Court Officer.

What's your Background?

I started training as a solicitor at a law firm in Durham and then Consett. I studied part time whilst working and gained my Law degree at Northumbria University. Half way through my training I decided that being a solicitor was no longer what I wanted to do. I decided instead that I wanted a career helping people, this then lead me to the YOS.

How would you describe your role?

My role involves me working with young people subject to a bail support condition, closely working with the young person and their family, supporting them primarily with bail conditions and court dates. However work on issues surrounding drugs and alcohol, mental health, education/employment and family support work is also covered by my role. I'm required to attend Sunderland Youth Court assisting the court and magistrates with information on young people and guidance on the youth justice system.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy working with young people and their families as you never know who you will meet and what help they may need, but equally I enjoy attending court as I enjoy working in a busy and happening environment and again you do not know what you might deal with on a week-to-week basis.

What couldn't you do without at work?

A good friendly networking system that you can rely on for support and advice.

What would you like to achieve in the future?

I would like to stay at Sunderland YOS and would hopefully like to become a Case Manager within the Service, having time to work with a young person on an order and using the skills I have learnt to address their offending behaviour. Personally I also have a ten month little girl who is teething and keeping me up a lot in the night, so I hopefully will remain sane and awake at work!

Royal Visit for Centenary Celebrations

On 2nd April 2008 HRH The Duke of Kent visited Sunderland Court as part of Centenary celebrations.

The main focus of the day was to illustrate how Sunderland Court currently deals with offenders, and how it compares to the way offenders were dealt with in 1907.

Two mock trials were re-enacted to demonstrate the differences between 1907 and 2007, and highlight the progress made over the last 100 years.

The event was attended by Sunderland dignitaries along with representatives from a number of services. Julie Simpson from ISSP represented Sunderland YOS at the event. Julie formed part of the first group of representatives who were presented to HRH The Duke of Kent alongside a police inspector, defence solicitor and representatives from probation and Group 4 Security. Long serving magistrates formed the second group of representatives. Julie said **"it was a nice occasion, I was proud to be part of"**.

Sunderland scores high

For the period April 2007 to March 2008 Sunderland YOS achieved 4th place out of 157 YOT's across England and Wales for its overall performance against the YJB Key Performance Indicators, National Standard Compliance, Recidivism and EPQA.

Sunderland YOS has also exceeded the average overall performance of its identified YJB family, its region and nationally.

Thank you to everyone for your hard work, which has made this achievement possible.

YOS Volunteers Celebration Evening

On Friday 13th June 2008, Sunderland YOS held a celebration evening for all volunteers. The purpose of the event was to thank the volunteers who provide a valuable service to numerous young people across the City.

The event was held at the Quayside Exchange in Sunderland and was relaxed and informal giving volunteers throughout the service the opportunity to share their experiences with one another.

Entertainment was provided by three local young people who showcased their talents singing and playing the guitar and there was also a quiz with prizes for the winners. In addition to this Councillor Pat Smith was in attendance to say a few words on behalf of the City Council. The evening was a great success and enjoyed by all.



Councillor Pat Smith who attended the event

Big thank you to all Volunteers

Sunderland Volunteer Mentoring Service currently has 56 volunteers enlisted with approximately 30 of those currently matched and working directly with the young people. Training will commence in July with a new intake of volunteers.

Sunderland City Council is awarding all volunteers for their hard work with an environmentally friendly bag, certificate and badge. Rewards can be collected from the reception area of any key council facility including all 20 public libraries.

Contacting the Youth Offending Service

For further information you can contact the Youth Offending Service at: Lambton House, 145 High Street West, Sunderland, SR1 1UW.

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For all newsletter enquiries, please contact the Planning and Information Team at the Youth Offending Service on **0191 566 3000**.

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