

Welcome to the 10th 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 April 2007. 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:

- Meet the new YOS Manager
- Get to know Eric Hodge, Groupwork Coordinator
- Take a look at what the RAP team have been doing
- Learn of some new YOS awards
- Features some famous performers
- Clean up the city.

A new era, but a continuing journey



Guy Kirk, new YOS Manager

The YOS is about to embark upon a new era with the arrival of new YOS Manager Guy Kirk on 3rd September 2007.

As Alan Scott and Kelly Davison-Pullan, Acting YOS Managers, prepare to hand over the reins in September, they reflect: **“we have been delighted by service achievements in the last six months. In particular the hard work of each and every member of YOS staff that resulted in the excellent inspection outcome. There have been more awards for innovation in practice recognising emerging and established schemes, individuals and teams. We have sustained our high performance with Sunderland once again being positioned as one of the top performing YOTs in the national Youth Justice Board performance tables for England and Wales 2006-2007. Our thanks go to all staff for their continued commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people”**

The YOS is looking forward to continuing our journey of success by working with Guy. We managed to catch up with Guy in the weeks leading up to his start, and he told us **“Sunderland YOS has a fantastic reputation and a track record of delivering effective services that make a real difference to the lives of children, young people, their families and victims of crime. I am delighted to have been appointed to this post and excited by the opportunity to work with such a talented group of staff, volunteers and partners in further developing the service. I am keen to take things forward and continue to innovate; building on what works, developing new approaches and strengthening areas where improvements can be made”.**

Guy has worked in safeguarding and with looked after children as well as with the whole range of issues facing children, young people and families in need for over 15 years as a social worker and team manager. His current strategic role is working in Northumberland with a wide range of internal and external partners including the private, voluntary and independent sectors to deliver Sure Start Children's Centres, some Extended Services and Childcare projects across the county.

Guy's motivation comes from **“making a difference; developing and delivering effective services that make a positive impact on people's lives - particularly those who have fewer opportunities and more obstacles to overcome if they are to achieve their potential. That and getting my two energetic boys, aged 8 and 10, ready, fed and watered for school in the morning... aided and abetted by the recent addition to our family - one very talkative (i.e. noisy) cockatiel!”**

Don't arm your attacker

'Don't arm your attacker' is the clear message that will be given to young offenders and young people at risk of offending over the summer months, in the wake of the recent national and local weapons attacks. This is just part of a whole range of programmes and resources running throughout the YOS in a bid to deal directly with a young persons offending behaviour, including:

- Hidden Harm – for parents of young offenders who abuse substances.
- Arrive Alive – road safety groups for young people convicted of car crime.
- SAP Substance Misuse – motivating young people through drama.
- Give Racism the Red Card – for young people who have been convicted of racially motivated offences.
- Skills and Emotional Intelligence Sessions – to guide young offenders away from peer pressure by using self-control.

Groupwork sessions, underpinned by peer group dynamics, are a vital part of tackling the offending behaviour. They focus on changing thinking and encouraging consideration of the costs and consequences of offending behaviour on themselves, their families, victims, and the wider community. Running since April 2006, they are quickly gathering momentum and producing results. In a recent session with 7 young offenders, every one of them reported that they preferred this new approach compared to one-to-one sessions and would not change anything at all about the session!

The YOS is currently offering a range of group work sessions for young offenders working with the Referral Order Team, Community Action and Support Team, Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme, and Detention and Training Order Team.



Offending behaviour programme resources

Getting to know...**Eric Hodge**



Eric Hodge, Groupwork Co-ordinator has been successfully delivering the new YOS groupwork sessions since April 2007. We managed to catch-up with Eric to see how he's been getting on:

What is your role / official title within the YOS?

Groupwork Co-ordinator

What is your background?

I started life at the Civil Service, with Ministry of Agriculture and then the late DHSS. I then spent a number of years in business for myself and others. After working in the voluntary sector with people in crisis for a number of years I chose to pursue a counselling diploma. School talks, young people's drop in centre and counselling to people with alcohol and drug issues lead me to concentrate on the plight of young people and I joined the secure services, working with high risk young people in Nottingham and County Durham for nine years, before joining Sunderland YOS.

Briefly, how would you describe your role?

Developing Groupwork programmes to challenge young offender's behaviours and reduce offending.

What couldn't you do without at work?

The lovely view!

Tell us your best joke?

Man goes to work at the zoo and while he is feeding the fish one jumps up and bites him. He kills it with a shovel but fearing the sack he hides the evidence by feeding the dead fish to the lion, Leo. The next day he is feeding the chimps. One bites him and again he kills it and feeds it to Leo. On the third day while feeding the bees they sting him and yes he kills them too and feeds them to Leo. When a new lion arrives that afternoon he asks Leo what the food is like there. Leo says " not too bad, I've had fish, chimps and mushy bees the last few days"!

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Not being locked up!

What would you like to achieve in the future?

Establishing the value of my post so it continues.

Thinking differently about drugs



Role-play of elderly woman taking drugs

The Substance Awareness Project (SAP) is a creative, innovative and pragmatic project, developed by the Odd Theatre Community Interest Group alongside Drugscope, to help young people to think differently about drugs. Three of Sunderland YOS RAP workers have been trained to deliver the project which is aimed at 13-21 year olds at risk of or involved in substance misuse to provide a realistic investigation into the experience of drugs, and have run two highly successful SAP days to date.

Sunderland YOS's Amanda Smith, Faye Clark and Gemma Tock have delivered two activity filled days to young people active to the YOS with substance misuse needs or at risk of developing substance misuse needs – although in reality they are much a part of the fun as the young people are! Alongside quizzes and games, the RAP workers act out the roles of an elderly person taking drugs and a 'nightmare teenager' taking drugs.

This produced a lot of laughs for the young people but also encouraged them to have a healthy debate about the dangers and effects of drugs and allowed them assess lifestyle choices that leads to substance misuse. The young people were active in thinking about support that is available to minimise substance misuse and left the days with quotes such as "SAP is fun" and **"SAP made me think differently about drugs"**.

One disengaged young person with a history of breaching orders started the day saying **"I will never be able to do that but I might stay for half an hour"** left 5 hours later, having thoroughly surprised himself for enjoying and staying the day!

Having attended the second day, representatives from Castington YOI have invited the YOS to deliver an event at the YOI and said **"It really opened our eyes to see what brilliant work you all do at RAP, the respect the lads have for you all was so refreshing to see, keep up the good work!"**

Ministry of YOS



Young person mixing on the decks

Sunderland YOS has teamed up with The Bunker, a Sunderland based professional recording and rehearsal space, to provide young offenders working with RAP with a chance to learning new skills. Twice a week the young people can drop into The Bunker at any time and stay for as long as they like. The sessions provide the young people with a safe environment to produce music and mc with their peers. The Friday afternoon sessions are particularly popular - a time when young people would often start their alcohol or substance misuse, which can lead to anti-social behaviour.

An extension to The Bunker, 'Ministry of YOS' was held recently at Sunderland based Bar "Pure". The bar was closed to the public and no alcohol was available but the young people had a stage, a fantastic set of decks and a huge sound system at their fingertips for an entire Friday afternoon. Well attended by young people and staff alike (some of whom needed ear plugs!), the young people took the opportunity to show off their mc'ing skills while others provided the soundtrack using the skills on the decks they had learned from the drop in sessions. One young person who attended said **"I really enjoyed the afternoon and loved being on the mike with the tunes pumping"**.

Some young people who attended the event had never been to the drop-in sessions before but are now attending on a regular basis. During the summer these young people will be working on producing their own CD's that will include mc'ing alongside their favourite tracks and are sure to be heard playing in YOS worker's cars in the near future.

Due to the outstanding success, two further events are planned over the summer.

Keys to the road for the YIP

Performers Joe Pasquale, Russ Abbot and Cory English have presented the YOS Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) with the keys to the road after a one-and-a-half year wait. The performers presented the YIP with a long awaited mini-bus, on behalf of the Variety Club of Great Britain, at a ceremony held at the Empire Theatre on 12th June. In making the presentation Russ Abbot said, **“It is an excellent opportunity for young people to have ownership of their own minibus”** but requested to the young people involved that they **“wear seatbelts and keep it clean”**.

Gareth Johnson, YIP Co-ordinator, said **“we applied for the minibus over a year-and-a-half ago because it was costing us a fortune to hire a vehicle every time we wanted to go on an excursion...this new bus will help us massively with the work that we do with the kids”**.

The YIP is a tailor made programme for some of the city’s most at-risk teenagers. The youngsters involved with the programme receive one-to-one support, a safe place to go, and the opportunity to take part in activities with others to get careers and education help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour through helping them grow and develop in order to improve their behaviour and so reduce youth crime and nuisance.



Handing over the mini bus is Joe Pasquale, Russ Abbot and Cory English.

The Sunderland Empire also donated theatre tickets to the YIP as part of the presentation. A number of council members were present to observe, including Councillor Stephenson who said **“this project has already proved its worth and the presentation of the minibus demonstrates a commitment to achieving further success in helping transform the lives of the young people involved”**.

The Big Recycle

In June this year Sunderland YOS supported the national ‘Big Recycle’ through Community Payback schemes (through which young offenders make amends for their offending), focused entirely on litter collection and recycling.

During the week of 25th June, young offenders collected 45 bags of litter including aluminium cans, plastic and glass bottles, paper and cardboard. These were then taken to the Alex Smiles recycling plant at Deptford, Sunderland. This community payback activity was combined with a short education programme on the importance and reasons for recycling in Sunderland, including a tour of the recycling plant and a talk from the company health and safety representative. The visit was aimed at delivering key messages to young people around the importance of recycling and the shortage of landfill sites for the future.

The event enabled a positive partnership to be forged with possibilities around provision of skips for community payback activity and employment for ex-offenders. Reflecting on the week, Simon Smart, YOS Restorative Justice Coordinator said **“it is hoped that this visit will help inform young people of the importance of recycling to the environment, and the valuable of community payback - whilst encouraging them not to drop litter themselves!”**



Young people taking part in recycling education session



Simon Smart, RJ Co-ordinator, Sunderland YOS with David Myers, Health and Safety Manager, Alex Smiles

High Performing YOS

2006-2007 was a good year for Sunderland YOS in terms of inspection and performance. In May 2007 the YOS received the eagerly awaited Inspection Report from HMI Probations, which portrays the YOS as a high performing YOT. The overall scores for each of the five inspection standards were:-

Standard	Rating
Management	4
Work with the Courts	2
Work with Children and Young People who offend	3
Work with Children and Young People Subject to a DTO	4
Victims and Restorative Justice	3

The YOS is delighted by this outstanding performance. There have been few scores of 4 (which represents 'excellent with outstanding features' and is the highest possible score for each section) awarded nationally and thus it is a real achievement to be awarded two ratings of 4.

The Inspectorate found a number of examples of particularly good practice across the five inspection areas.

These were: -

- Case studies presented at the YOS Board.
- Short placements at the YOS for trainee police officers.
- Restorative Justice assessments completed at court
- On Track work with a young person in developing a set of anti-bullying playing cards.
- The Looked After Children Offending Prevention Project.
- The YOS Resources Library offering a wide range of interventions for young people.
- The YOS Recidivism (re-offending) Project.
- Community Payback work in supporting the cities '100 day clean up campaign' in the Hendon area of Sunderland.

Additionally, the annual national performance tables for Youth Offending Teams across England and Wales were released on 4th June 2007 and Sunderland was one of only 8 YOTs to achieve level 5 with an overall performance score of 81.9% (the 4th highest ranked score). This is an excellent achievement for the service considering that there are a total of 155 YOTs in England and Wales. Sunderland's overall performance was also significantly higher than the average performance achieved nationally, by its family group and the northeast region as a whole.

ISSP awarded - A new direction

The last YOS Newsletter reported on the efforts of a group of young offenders working with the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP). The young offenders did such a good job decorating a local house that the ISSP scheme, 'A New Direction', has won a Howard League for Penal Reform Community Programmes Award. In writing to invite the YOS to a celebratory award event at the House of Lords on 24th July 2007, the Howard League for Penal Reform said, "the judging panel decided that 'A New Direction' should be recognised as an Outstanding Scheme".



Andy Lamb and Jim Sexton (YOS Staff) receiving the award from Baroness Linklater.

A New Direction – Hylton Castle Community Centre



Young person decorating

'A New Direction' has extended to Sunderland's Hylton Castle Community Centre, on the back of the outstanding success of the first round. Starting the New Year in earnest, the young offenders working with ISSP have spent the last 6 months painting and decorating corridors, kitchens and toilets, much to the satisfaction of the library and the local community. The young offenders positively reacted with the community and showed a real dedication to improving the community centre facilities for them.

Some of the young people have even went on to engage with Learn Direct which is based in the centre and completed basic Maths and English courses.

'Hoops4Health'



Schoolchildren gearing up for the basketball tournament

The YOS 'On Track' intervention and prevention programme has joined forces with Newcastle Eagles 'Hoops4Health' programme to stage a basketball roadshow promoting healthy living, teamwork and individual responsibility.

This exciting new partnership has been rolled out in six primary schools across Washington in 3 stages. Stage One was a roadshow where the Newcastle Eagles players talked to the primary school children about a healthy lifestyle including healthy eating, no smoking, fitness and basketball.

Stage Two was about basketball coaching to prepare the children for Stage Three, which is a tournament where the children have the opportunity to show all the skills they have learned during the coaching competing against the other schools involved in the programme.

Schoolchildren gearing up for the basketball tournament

The tournament took place on Tuesday June 26th at Washington school and Andrew Bridge, one of the regular starting 5 in Newcastle Eagles, was at hand to help.

Lisa Boyd, 'On Track' manager said, **"the health and wellbeing of the children we work with is of paramount importance and as a prevention programme sport is a great way to get young people involved and interested in learning some important, positive life messages through having fun and enjoying themselves.**

This has been an excellent partnership with the Newcastle Eagles and we'd like to thank their players and coaches for all their hard work with our local schools here in Washington not only promoting health and exercise, but also giving children plenty to think about in terms of determination and personal commitment."

Phoenix Parents Day

Going forth with the award winning YOS Phoenix Project, the YOS has again linked up with the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service to offer parents (working with Sungate Parenting Programme) a unique opportunity to:

- Break the cycle of anti-social behaviour within the family environment and the community
- Enhance parental responsibility
- Develop a more positive relationship with their children
- Get the confidence to challenge unacceptable behaviour
- Increase their knowledge of fire safety in the home
- Increase their empathy for Fire and Rescue Service.

Through a one-day course, parents are introduced to the role of the firefighter and take part in practical activities and tasks designed to reflect that. Hose running, branch operation, search techniques and procedures are part of the practical work that parents undertake during the course to increase their confidence and ability to achieve, as well as developing their teamworking, communication and leadership skills.

Creating an environment where instructors consistently encourage, praise and support gives parents an insight to the benefits of this approach when dealing with children.

9 women from Sungate attended the first course with 100% reporting that the course would help them be a better role model; 89% reporting that their views of their children had changed as a result of the course; and 100% reporting that they would recommend the course to other parents. All the parents will receive a certificate for their efforts, a CD of photographs, a written assessment of their performance and an offer of a Home Risk Assessment.



Parents receiving their instructions

A further three courses are planned before the end of the year, the next one being in September

The outdoor challenge

The RAP Team have linked up with KECO to provide a programme of outdoor activities for young people aged 14-18 that are working with the team. KECO provides an alternative to education for identified young people with substance misuse or education, training and employment needs.

Twice a week the young people can take part in activities such as karting, canoeing, kayaking, climbing, orienteering, kite boarding, etc, all of which act as a catalyst for meeting personal and social education needs. The young people learn to overcome challenges with a major emphasis being on individual success which greatly enhances self-confidence, self-control, and self-discipline.

Young people engaging with the programme have commented:

"I really enjoyed it, I would do it again" – Karting participant

"Enjoyed it, had good fun!" BMX and Skateboarding participant

"Purely belt and would love to do it again" – Karting participant



Young person mountain biking



Go-Karting with the RAP team

Focus on a YOS Mentor...



Ashley Smith

Sunderland Volunteer Mentoring Service offers vulnerable young people advice and support from an older, more experienced person, providing a protective factor against peer pressure and other pressures in the young person's life.

Mentors work with young people at all stages of the Criminal Justice System, ranging from young people identified as 'at risk' to young people leaving custody. Ashley Smith is one of many volunteer mentors working with the service and has been volunteering since September 2006. She said: -

'I looked into volunteering because I wanted to help young people who have perhaps been seen to have 'gone off the rails,' vulnerable young people who need additional support to help them realise they are not a lost cause. Young people have feelings and they care about what people think about them. I wanted to give a young person a chance to prove that they can make the right decisions and choices in life and support them in doing this.

Ashley has been mentoring a young person for four months. This is what Ashley had to say about her experience of mentoring: -

I have experienced a real sense of achievement through helping someone and gaining a young person's trust. My eyes have been opened and I am able to consider life from the point of view of a young person. My young person and I have built up a relationship of mutual trust and confidence, which has provided us with a strong foundation to start looking at their behaviour and how to address certain issues.

If I could use three words to describe my experience of mentoring they would be rewarding, challenging and brilliant. Mentoring is definitely something I would recommend to friends and colleagues.'

In brief



Great women's run

Sunderland YOS has once again been active with two of its colleagues running for the Great Women's run in June. Heather Richardson and Joanne Banks, both from the Business Support Unit ran an

excellent run in just 1 hour and 15 minutes and raised almost £300 for Cancer Research UK. Heather and Joanne said, "it was a fantastic experience and we got to hear a lot of very inspiring stories from those overcoming cancer and their families".



Wrong Trousers Day

Friday 29th June saw YOS staff wearing the wrong trousers to work (jeans) and eating cake in support of the Wallace and Gromit Children's Foundation 'Wrong Trousers Day'. The day raised £50.21 to help improve the quality of life of sick children in hospitals and hospices across the UK.

Youth Justice Plan 2007/2008

Youth Justice Plan
2007/2008
Sunderland Youth Offending Service



The Youth Justice Plan 2007/2008 (and a summary version) is now available. The 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.

Risk Smart



Sunderland City Council scooped 2 of the 5 Alarm Risk Management Awards 2007 and Sunderland YOS was one of them. The YOS in partnership with the Council's Risk Management Section has won the 'highly commended' category in the Alarm Risk Management Awards 2007. Winners were announced at the Alarm National Conference dinner at Cardiff on Monday 2nd July and members of the Sunderland City Council Risk Management Section attended to collect the award on behalf of the YOS,

The YOS risk management innovation includes cutting edge internal risk management systems to reduce risks for young people, a Youth Offending Service Media and Communications Strategy to drive down the fear of crime and a scheme whereby highly trained volunteer mentors work with young people at all stages in the Criminal Justice System.

Contacting the Youth Offending Service

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For all newsletter enquiries, please contact the Planning and Information Team at the Youth Offending Service on 0191 5663000.

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