

Sunderland Youth Offending Service

Newsletter – Issue 11 / March 2008

Welcome to the 11th 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 August 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:

- Win Beacon
- Rub shoulders with the YJB
- Tackle substance misuse
- Meet some of our award winners
- Get inspired by a young ambassador
- See what painting and decorating has been done
- Have some fun fundraising
- Blow up some balloons.

Beacon Award for Reducing Re-offending

Sunderland has been awarded the prestigious Beacon award for its ability to deliver innovative, award-winning and nationally-recognised approaches to criminal justice.

The application, lead by the YOS, on behalf of the range of partners working in Sunderland to Reduce Re-offending, was announced as a winner at the gala awards ceremony held at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London on 4th March 2008.

The event was hosted by former BBC news presenter Martyn Lewis CBE, who upon presenting the Reducing Re-Offending Beacon Award to Sunderland 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. There are also increases in the number of adult offenders accessing services and 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."**

To back our bid, we demonstrated our history of developing innovative schemes like 'Tackle It' in partnership with Sunderland Football Club and the Phoenix Project with Tyne and Wear Fire Services. Sunderland Football Club, one of the many partners involved in the application, was with us at the gala event to receive the award.

Councillor Bob Symonds, Leader of the Council said **"reducing re-offending is a key commitment for the Council, and Sunderland YOS delivers highly effective services which aim to prevent offending and reduce re-offending by young people. It also works to support victims of crime and help make Sunderland a safer place to live ...I'd like to say well done to all the staff, volunteers and partners involved and thank them for their hard work which has been recognised as best practice."**

The award represented a double win for Sunderland with Community and Cultural Services also receiving a Beacon Award in the category of Reducing Health Inequalities.



Guy Kirk (YOS Manager), John Fothergill (SAFC), Keith Moore (Deputy Director of Children's Services), Judith Hay (Head of Positive Contribution and Economic Wellbeing), Alan Scott (YOS Operations Manager) and Kelly Davison-Pullan (YOS Policy and Performance Manager) celebrate Beacon

Tackling Substance Misuse



Young people with Baroness Andrews OBE

A group of 10 young people from Washington and Sunderland, who work with two of Sunderland YOS Prevention Services, have been working with Tyne & Wear Museums and Superkrush Films to create two fascinating and thought-provoking films about the issues of substance use. The films premiered at Sunderland University in July 2007.

The 15-minute films, Harvest and Lilya, have been produced as part of the diverse and effective 'Tackle It' project, which aims to address the effects that substance misuse can have on young people's lives. The project involved young people from both the 'Wear Kids' and 'Wear Kids Looked After'

programmes, and created material that will relate to those who are vulnerable to substance misuse.

The group of 13 and 14 year olds visited Beamish and The Poison Garden at Alwick Gardens to gain inspiration for the films. They were then actively involved in every stage of the production of both films, from scriptwriting to editing. After attending a series of drama workshops the group members have all the starring roles in the film.

A young person participating in 'Tackle It' said **"The project was really, really educational and fun and I hope there will be more opportunities to do things like this in the future. I hope that young people will learn more about substances and misusing them especially for the effect they can have on you."**

As a follow-up to the premier, the young people got the opportunity to meet Baroness Andrews OBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, when she visited the region in August 2007.

On the same DVD, there is an educational interactive workshop that the YOS will be sharing around the region. The resource will also now be used as part of intervention material with other young people in contact with the service.

YOS rubs shoulders with the YJB

The YOS welcomed the YJB Interim Chair Graham Robb and his colleagues Chris Holmes and Linda Bush to Sunderland on 3rd October 2007 as part of the YJB's visit to the North East Region.

Staff were keen to show off their hardwork and enjoyed demonstrating their achievements over lunch. Focus of discussion centred around RAP, Referral Orders, the Phoenix Project, Volunteer Mentoring and Accommodation, to name but a few. We certainly gave them some food for thought!

The YJB displayed an interest in how we manage our information and use our analysis to drive practice changes. We presented to them about how we invest resources in specialist staff and systems, how we ensure robust performance monitoring and data validation, how we have developed and maintained outstanding relationships with the software provider of YOIS and UMIS, etc. They even came back at the end of the day to learn more.

Children and young people are at the core of the work we do and Graham was delighted to meet some of the Prevention Service users at the Stadium of Light.

After a fulfilling and exciting day in Sunderland, Graham Robb said **"I was delighted to visit Sunderland YOS which is one of the highest performing teams in the country. The way in which the YOS is able to identify and then work with the most troubled young people and their families is producing results**



YJB meets Guy Kirk, Judith Hay and Helen Paterson

for the community in reducing the harm caused by a very few young people. The partnership with the Stadium of Light also shows how a range of partners can work to help young people change their behaviour and have better chances of success".

"I think we all want to live in areas where young people feel safe in their community and the community feels safe with their young people. Sunderland YOS with all its partners is making a major contribution to that goal".

In return for sharing our work with him, Graham is coming back to Sunderland to attend the YOS Conference in March 2008 and give a national perspective on developments in youth justice.

Getting to know Nellie from Zimbabwe



Eric Hodge and Mark Lancaster with one of the young people and the Banner Theatre Company.

Sunderland YOS has been busy building on the success of the 'Show Racism the Red Card' groupwork sessions, with a new programme of racial awareness and diversity programmes for young offenders to undertake as part of their groupwork sessions.

For those young offenders who participated well in the 'Show Racism the Red Card' session, the YOS invited them along to a racial awareness performance at a local theatre back in October 2007.

Using a rich tapestry of live musical styles from rock, rap and reggae to blues, folk and jazz, together with video interviews and archive films, the Banner Theatre Company put on a spectacular show to tell the story of Britain's newest arrivals – Nellie from Zimbabwe, Innocent from Congo and Sherzad from Kurdistan.

The performance highlighted the human journey of people who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, dodging borders, bullets and bureaucracy in their quest for safety and security from war torn lands in Africa and the Middle East. The performance cut through the myths, lies and prejudice surrounding people looking for sanctuary in England's green but sometimes not so pleasant land.

This was a fantastic performance conveying a powerful message effectively. One of the young people said, **"this was very close to my offence and made me realise how I just added to their misery."**

Sunderland YOS is committed to improving the quality of racial and diversity work with young people. Next on the agenda is assisting Huddersfield University and the YJB in their search for good practice in racial and diversity issues. We believe we have and are developing lots of good practice here at Sunderland YOS.

Santa's little helper

Christmas came early for one of our young offenders as he helped delight the city's children and shoppers on their shopping trip to Debenhams.



Debenhams's Selling and Support Manager, Sue Patterson, with YOS Restorative Justice Worker Ellise Gooding.

The young offender had previously shoplifted some cosmetics from the Debenhams store in the Bridges Shopping Centre and was asked to carry out some direct reparation to repay the crime. Following a letter of apology to the store, the young person spent a day blowing up 250 balloons that read 'I've seen Santa at Debenhams'.

Alongside this the young person met Selling and Support Manager, Sue Patterson, to discuss the impact of the offence on the store and her reasons for asking the young person to complete the direct reparation. In fact, Debenhams regularly ask for similar forms of direct reparation, which in the past has included painting / decorating and clearing up areas of the multi-level store.

Debenhams's Selling and Support Manager, Sue Patterson said **"Debenhams are happy to be involved with Sunderland Youth Offending Service Restorative Justice Team giving young people a chance to make amends for their behaviour"**.

From experience comes wisdom



William meets some young offenders

International Ambassador, William Kellibrew was one of two American students to be invited to the city to study as part of Sunderland's Friendship Agreement with Washington DC, which aims to develop stronger educational, cultural and economic links between the two historically linked cities. As part of his visit, William was keen to share his experiences of growing up in one of Washington DC's most troubled neighbourhoods, and tell young people how rewarding it can be to give back to the community.

On 13th December from Washington Old Hall, William met and spoke with some young people who had offended and were engaged with the YOS, to share the benefit of his experiences and to pass on some positive life messages. William was uniquely placed to engage with the young people, given his life successes at overcoming the personal difficulties of growing up in a troubled neighbourhood to becoming an overseas honours student.

William showed the young people a DVD of his appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show and talked to the young people about his life journey - about choices, who he turned to for advice, mistakes he made and how he managed to make the right choices.

Speaking at the time, Guy Kirk, YOS Manager said **"We are delighted William has found the time to come and meet some of the young people involved with our service. Role models are important and William's story provides a powerful and positive message to young people that despite a difficult background it is possible for everyone to make the right choices and go on to make a success of life – providing a better future for the wider community, their family and themselves"**.



William inspires some young offenders

North East Youth Justice Assembly

Sunderland YOS proved once again that we have all the correct ingredients for a successful service.

At this year's 2nd North East Youth Justice Assembly, Sunderland achieved many accolades including two winners trophies and two runners up. The awards recognise the innovation and dedication shown by workers within the youth justice service across the region.



On Track

The team award went to the 'On Track' team, a multi-agency co-located team from Washington. The

team were recognised for the innovation of practice, with special mention of the development of the new board game intervention that helps young people explore risk-taking behaviour, its consequences and solutions.

On Track works with children between the ages of 4 and 13, and their families, with the aim of intervening at an early stage to reduce risk.

Wear Kids Looked After Team

Runner up in this category was the YOS Wear Kids Looked After Team. Working with Children Looked After was mentioned throughout the event and Sunderland were praised for the innovation of practice they had **developed in tackling this issue and the impact the team are having locally.**

Phoenix

The Phoenix Programme, a partnership between the YOS and the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue service, were highly commended.

Andrew Lamb

Andrew Lamb was highly commended for his contributions to the reduction and prevention of youth crime in the North East.

Alison Minniss



Alison Minniss with her award

Accommodation Officer, Alison Minniss won the prestigious Individual Award at the 2007 North East Youth Assembly Awards. Alison works directly with individuals to help them apply for accommodation and is also involved in developing measures to avoid homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation.

Alison was nominated because of her outstanding commitment to preventing homelessness for young offenders.

She has influenced:

- Regional developments through her significant contribution to the regional accommodation forum.
- Local practice through the development of information systems ensuring 'early warning' on those at risk of homelessness.
- A high performance outturn for Sunderland on accommodation through her work.

Described as committed and flexible, with a 'can do' approach, Alison is recognised for going the extra mile and showing compassion.

There are numerous examples of her personal commitment from relentlessly pursuing housing options to preventing families from being split up to personally transporting young offenders to their new home and resolving complex homelessness cases. Alison is highly regarded and respected for the outcomes she achieves with some of the most complex and disengaged young offenders.

Jane Raffell



Jane Raffell, pictured with her award

Volunteer Mentor Jane Raffell is one of our many valued volunteers who give up their spare time to help young people stay on the right side of the law. For her contribution, Jane was a runner-up at the 2007 North East Justice Assembly. She said **"initially when I started volunteering I did it to give a young person a chance. I didn't think I would get much out of it, but it really is a two-way process. You get a great deal of satisfaction to see someone develop and try new things and really overcome barriers"**.

Over the past year and a half, Jane has worked hard to build up a mentees confidence, and has seen big changes in her mentee – changes that have brought Jane a great deal of satisfaction.

Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice team were also highly commended. The team have made a significant impact on work with victims and the effective use of direct and indirect reparation.



The Restorative Justice Team

National Youth Justice Awards 2007



The Attorney General and Paul Cavadino, Chief Executive of sponsor organisation Nacro, present Andrew Lamb of Sunderland YOS with his winning certificate

Sunderland YOS's very own Andrew Lamb won the 2007 Youth Justice Award for "outstanding contribution to tackling youth crime".

In choosing Andrew as the winner of the category the judging panel said: **"Andrew is an energetic advocate for young offenders, showing a real and genuine commitment towards changing lives.**

A painter and decorator by trade, he undertook an intensive plastering training course, which enabled him to pass on a variety of skills to young offenders through the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) at Sunderland Youth Offending Team".

"He has succeeded in engaging some of the most challenging young offenders who have been assigned to the ISSP - a direct alternative to custody - where they gain developing new work skills in painting and decorating, plastering and tiling. Andrew has negotiated use of local college facilities to conduct initial training, and also takes the young offenders into the community to work on worthwhile projects, such as re-decorating the house of a terminally ill cancer patient, a women's centre and crèche, and a community centre".

"Andrew's work with the young offenders has had a positive effect on the local community, changing attitudes towards the young people, who have contributed to local services. Taking part in worthwhile projects has given the offenders a sense of purpose which makes them want to succeed. Besides their practical skills, they have gained confidence and self-esteem, and in addition Andrew introduced concepts of victim awareness as part of the programme. The scheme has led to reduced reoffending, and several of those who have taken part in the scheme have been nominated for accreditation from the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme".

Meadow Nursery Lodge

Young people have been out paying back to the community again, this time through a decorating project that has helped a community group have a home of their own.

The South Area Parents (SAP) Support Group were the grateful recipients after securing the lease of Meadow Nursery Lodge at Silksworth Gardens – but a lodge that was in need of major decoration work. Sue Lodge, SAP Project Worker, had heard about the excellent work done by our young offenders, and approached Andrew Lamb (pictured above) and Mark Simpson for help.

Keen to assist, a 12-week programme of work was established and a small group of young people began painting and decorating the Lodge's 8 rooms. Simultaneously young people undertaking community reparation, as part of a court ordered YOS intervention, cleaned an area in the garden to enable the SAP project to have outside space where they can run summer activities. The young people involved had the added bonus of working towards the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Speaking of her experiences with the young people Sue Leigh, SAP Project Worker said **"Since the start of the project I have seen a difference in the young people...I have seen a difference in their confidence and a change in behaviour.**

One of the young people clearly loves painting and he is now looking for a job in painting and decorating. He has come on a long way – all down to the work of the YOS."

YOS Advocate and award winning Andrew Lamb (see above) said **"The project has been a lifeline for young people on an Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme for whom opportunities can seem few and far between"**.



Young offender decorating one of the Lodge's 8 rooms

Children in Need 2007

Friday 17th November was Children In Need Day and as usual Sunderland YOS was highly involved in a huge variety of fundraising activities ranging from a raffle with prizes donated by staff right through to beauty parlour torture!

The fundraising efforts started a day early with the customary cake sale, with cakes donated by YOS staff. For those staff who usually wore office attire there was also the chance to dress down in exchange for a £1 contribution.



Jack after his transformation

The main event came courtesy of the Wear Kids Prevention Team, with 4 brave colleagues volunteering to undergo various beauty treatments. That included waxing, the removal of a 34-year-old moustache and Jack Seward Prevention Manager going from brunette to blonde all in the pain and name of charity.

A number of other events took place throughout the day including staff wearing silly wigs and hats and participating in a nail biting dominos challenge. The grand finale and end to a fantastic day was the now traditional raffle and auction with some great prizes on offer.

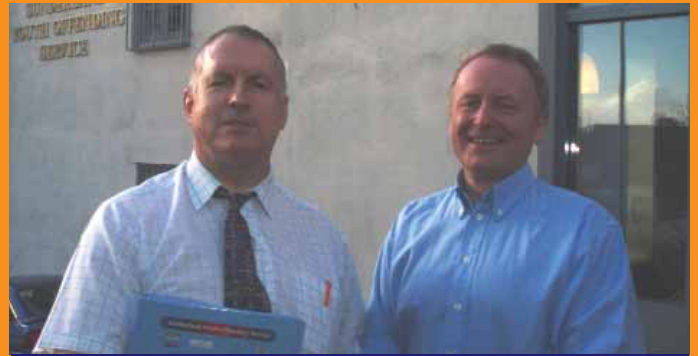
In total Sunderland YOS raised £472.89 for Children in Need 2007, far exceeding any previous efforts. The day was extremely successful and an excellent team building exercise for staff across all areas of the YOS.

Guy Kirk, YOS Manager, said of the day **“thank you to everyone involved. The level of enthusiasm, generosity and commitment shown by everyone across the whole of the YOS was remarkable”**.



The domino challenge reaches its conclusion

Celebrating staff commitment



John and Phil

Final Warning and Referral Order Case Managers John Pearson and Phil Whitwell, celebrate 20 years of long service with Sunderland Council.

John and Phil came to the YOS when it was known back in the day as 'Intermediate Treatment' and have stuck with it through office moves around the city (St.Thomas Street, Ashbrooke Towers, East Cross Street...) and multiple name changes (Juvenile Justice Project, Youth Justice Service...). The staffing size has increased from just 6.5 to now over 100, not to mention all our sessionals and volunteers!

Their original aim was to co-ordinate the Intermediate Treatment Fund to give young people incentives not to commit crime, including taking young people on outdoor activities with their qualifications as Mountain Leaders and working with those on Supervision Orders. Court duty was different back then too, with the whole of the North East needing cover!

Of course the service has changed radically over the years, and John and Phil now reside in the Final Warning and Referral Order Team based at Lambton House. With the years of knowledge and experience that they bring, we can safely say that they are valued team members! We managed to catch-up with Phil and John about their award (and £50!):

John said **“I have worked with some fantastic people over the years and seen the organisation grow considerably in size and importance. I initially only came to work here for 6 months but the last 20 years have gone by in the blink of an eye...be aware how quickly time passes!”**.

Phil said **“I take great delight in seeing the young people I have worked with over the years become stable and law-abiding adults”**. Phil then went on to tell us **“don't take things too seriously”** after amusing us with tales from the court docks over the years!

Angela Stanness, Business Support Assistant, has also been awarded 20 years service but didn't want any fuss. We send her a well-deserved congratulations anyway! (Steve Clarke, Deborah Loraine and Yvonne Hewison next up with between 15 and 17 years service each so far....?).

In brief

YOS saves 84 trees

The YOS has been actively shedding all its paper via the recycling bins on every floor and due to massive staff commitment to saving the planet we saved 84 trees in 2007. Keep up the good work everyone!

The three peaks of Yorkshire



One of the three peaks

Yet again, YOS staff have been out in the countryside raising some much needed money for charity. Senior Practitioner Michael Edwards has been tackling the three Yorkshire peaks of Pen-y-

gent (2276ft), Whernside (2415ft) and Ingleborough (2372ft) – a total of 24.5 miles undertaken in just 9 hours (3 hours ahead of the target) on 14th July 2007. After raising £215 for the British Red Cross for humanitarian aid Michael said **“The day was very hard going made even worse by the weather which was constant rain and wind and made the ground very boggy and scrabbling difficult as the rocks were slippery. My party remained in good spirits for most of the day even managing to run parts of the way trying to achieve the quickest possible time. However the rain, wind and a couple of wrong turns (!) meant that towards the end we were both very tired and insistent that we would never do anything as stupid as that again”.**

Safe at work

The YOS's very own hero John Pearson came to the rescue of a choking colleague recently with the use of the Heimlich manoeuvre. Simon Smart was the grateful recipient after his lunch became stubbornly lodged! John never knows when he will need his first aid training, but that day just proved that you never know what's round the corner.

Leanne Lane, Faye Clark, Amanda Smith, Phil Whitwell, Gemma Tock and Wilf Garbutt are also YOS first aiders and their names are listed near the stairwells in Lambton House, and in the BSU Office at East Cross Street.

Big Wins for Big Recycling



Simon Smart receiving the award

We reported in the last newsletter that the YOS's Restorative Justice Programme had been active in supporting the national 'Big Recycle' week. We have since learned that our efforts have earned us first

place in the Regional Monitor Excellence Awards for Recycling Initiative of the Year! Thanks go out to the Restorative Justice Team and our partner in recycling, Alex Smiles Recycling Plant.

Genes for Jeans

Well done to staff in the Business Support Unit and Planning and Information Team for coming to work in their jeans one Friday in October and raising £33.60 for children affected by genetic disorders.

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.

Tel: 0191 566 3000, Fax: 0191 566 3002

E-mail: yos@sunderland.gov.uk

Redesigned Website: www.sunderland.gov.uk/yos

For all newsletter enquiries, please contact the Planning and Information Team at the Youth Offending Service on 0191 566 3000. This publication can be made available in Braille, large print, on audio-cassette and in other languages.

Please contact the Youth Offending Service for further information if you require any of these.

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