

# Sunderland Youth Offending Service

Quarterly Newsletter: Issue 2 July 2003

## Introduction by Judith Hay, Youth Offending Service Manager

This newsletter is an opportunity for all staff, partner organisations and stakeholders to be updated on the work in the Service, including future plans. You can see throughout the newsletter that the YOS has once again gained significant achievements during the last year. The YJB Media Award, the Community Care Award and the Quality Awards were highly competitive arenas. The staff and young people involved should be extremely proud of these achievements. The two-day visit by the Cabinet Office offered us a challenging but rewarding experience in opening the Service up to external scrutiny. I was very pleased with their observations of the Service; from our work with young people through to the work of the Chief Officer Steering Group.

### Key developments areas that I have prioritised during the last 6 months have been:

- Securing new premises! We are in the final phase of agreeing a move to lovely premises - Lambton House. These premises will be for staff and we will retain East Cross Street as a young people/parent centre.
- Appointment of a management team - I am particularly pleased with the appointment of staff who come from a range of backgrounds and therefore bring valuable experience and knowledge to the Service and truly reflect the nature of multi-disciplinary work.
- Introducing a new Performance Framework with managers, linking into supervision and appraisal. This has included restructuring parts of the Service to ensure that Performance Measures are met and operational services enhanced. The appointment of a programme manager and a CAMHS worker in particular will ensure that we continue to improve.

Finally from me - I continue to be impressed with the quality and commitment of staff in the Youth Offending Service and partner organisations, who have to cope with an ever changing agenda in a challenging area of work.

I hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter and I look forward to seeing your contributions in future.

## The Youth Offending Service finds Success at the National Community Care Awards - For the Second Year Running!

Service Users and Staff from Sunderland Youth Offending Service (YOS) attended the National Community Care Awards ceremony in London, in November 2002. The YOS had two of the three short listed entries in the category 'Young Offenders'. These were the Community Payback Scheme, and the North Washington Youth Inclusion Project. The winner of the award, 'for innovative and outstanding practice in working with young offenders', was the YOS Community Payback Scheme. The judges made particular mention of the fact that Sunderland YOS has had two projects short-listed in this category for each of the last two years, and also won the category last year.

The 'Community Payback' Scheme is tailored to the needs of people in Sunderland. The aim is to make a difference to the lives of young people who have offended or are at risk of offending, and the communities in which they live. Community Payback involves young people making amends for their behaviour – either directly to the victim(s), or indirectly through participation in a Community Payback Scheme. Activities take place in schools, youth centres, community centres and other charitable or community run organisations. As well as making amends, the aim is to increase a young person's awareness of how their behaviour affects their families, the victim and the community.

The £5,000 prize money from the Award has been spent to further develop the 'Positive Images' arts scheme, one of the Community Payback Projects initiated by Sunderland YOS. Agreements have been made to display posters produced by the young people within stations and trains on the Tyne and Wear Metro system that now runs to Sunderland.

The money will also fund a resident artist to work with the young people on the Scheme, and will pay for production and printing costs for a range of 'merchandise' produced by the young people for schools (e.g. posters, badges and key rings), based on key issues that they themselves identify as being of importance, e.g. anti bullying and anti drugs messages.

For further information about the Community Payback Scheme, contact Gregg Wheatley, Restorative Justice Coordinator, on 0191 553 7300.



Youth Offending Service Staff and Service Users at the National Community Care Awards

## Young People Return as Mentors on the Phoenix Community Fire Safety Project

A young offender has made a significant improvement in his offending behaviour, following involvement with an award-winning project sponsored by Sunderland Youth Offending Service.

'James', a prolific offender with a serious alcohol abuse problem, joined the Sunderland Youth Offending Service (YOS) Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) in 2002. From here he was referred to the Phoenix Community Fire Safety Project, which is run in collaboration with the Community Fire Safety Team based in Sunderland.

James worked very well with the staff and other young people on the scheme. In February 2003 he successfully completed his ISSP programme and had also managed to control his use of alcohol. James has returned three times to act as a mentor at the Phoenix Project, providing a positive link between the young people and the fire officers. This is a significant step forward for him, and this approach is also helping other young people adapt more quickly to the programme. Several others have returned as mentors, demonstrating the success of the scheme.

During the challenging week-long programme, James received training identical to that of a newly recruited fire fighter. The course teaches: basic first aid and resuscitation techniques; domestic/household fire risk-assessment, and; how to use the different fire extinguishers that are currently available. James was also trained in fire-fighting techniques (including the use of breathing apparatus) and was shown how to maintain fire-fighting equipment. He had to negotiate his way through smoke filled buildings and mock sewer tunnels to recover casualties. Many of the skills that James acquired, such as team working and first aid, are transferable to everyday life, says Station Officer Gary Cuthbertson who runs the programmes at the Fire Service.



*YOS and Fire Brigade staff supporting young people successfully completing a recent Phoenix Course*

Feedback from James and other young people has been excellent. Most are apprehensive before attending, but on completing the course have said they thoroughly enjoyed it. Several have asked to join the Phoenix mentoring scheme that James is involved in. Gregg Wheatley, the Restorative Justice Coordinator who oversees the Project within the YOS, says that these young people are keen to return and help out on the courses.

At the end of the programme, the young people demonstrate what they have learnt by carrying out an exercise simulating attendance at a house fire. James, along with the other young people involved, was given the opportunity to invite relatives and friends to see what he had achieved in the week. Following this, James was presented with certificates recording his achievements on the course. This is a positive measure that promotes confidence in the young people involved, some of who may have left school with no formal qualifications. One young man was recently successful in obtaining an apprenticeship, and he was able to show his certificates at the interview as evidence of what he had achieved.

At a recent presentation, the three young men completing the course (all on Referral Orders) agreed to return as mentors, having impressed staff with their commitment and enthusiasm. One participant said: "I thought the course would be crap", but went on to say he had thoroughly enjoyed it. Another agreed, commenting, "I reckon it was excellent". One young man even overcame a fear of heights, after encouragement from his peers and the staff. When asked what they enjoyed most during the week, all three said the exercise in the simulated sewer!

One of these, 'Michael', is hoping to go into the Army. His mother said that before the course "he would have lain in bed most of the day", but since becoming involved "he can't wait to get in and tell us what he's been doing every day". Michael's parents felt his continued involvement in the project was a very positive thing. Michael feels he made one stupid mistake, which led to his Referral Order, but he has learnt from this and now he's putting things right. He is determined to put the past behind him, to get on with his life, and to continue helping at the Phoenix project as a mentor.



*Young people display their certificates, joined by family, friends and project staff at a recent Presentation*

*Note: Some names have been changed.*

## Getting to Know You....Jim Sexton

The Youth Offending Service Bail and Remand Team support young people who are subject to bail conditions, prior to receiving sentence. Jim Sexton recently joined the team...

**Name:** Jim Sexton.

**Role:** Bail and Remand Manager.

**Place of Work:** YOS, East Cross Street.

**Background:** I recently retired from Northumbria Police after 30 years of service. My last position was as Chief Inspector at Washington where I was Operations Manager.



**Q** In one paragraph, how would you describe your role?

**A** As Bail and Remand manager, I need to ensure that my team works effectively in providing a service to Sunderland and Houghton Youth Courts, that we comply with national standards; that the necessary multi agency protocols are in place, reviewed and updated where necessary; that performance indicators relevant to my team are met, and the systems and processes required to deliver a quality service are in place. I also run the Appropriate Adults scheme and will have a role in connection with the Referral Orders Team during John Egan's absence

**Q** What couldn't you do without at work?

**A** Based on my first week at East Cross Street – a pint of milk, it's in short supply! On a more serious note I own a pocket size electronic work organizer that I carry around and use as a personal diary and telephone directory, I'd be lost without it

**Q** What do you most like about your job?

**A** Still early days, but I always think that people are important. First impressions of the YOS staff are that everyone is approachable and helpful. I've always found that being part of a successful team is most rewarding. For a long time I have felt strongly that attempting to divert young people from offending is an important priority for society as a whole and I look forward to making a real contribution to the work of the YOS. I'm pleased to continue working within the criminal justice system where my previous police experience, knowledge and contacts should prove beneficial and ease the transition.

**Q** What would you like to achieve in the future (either personally or within the job)?

**A** At present I want nothing more than to familiarise myself with what is a new job in a new organisation - then take it from there.

## Sunderland Social Services Quality Awards

The work of Sunderland Youth Offending Service's Referral Order Scheme has been recognised in the Social Services Quality Awards, having been commended in the category of 'Key Processes'.

The Referral Order Scheme is being delivered as part of a range of activities that allow Sunderland Youth Offending Service (YOS) to achieve its principle aim "to prevent offending by children and young people"

The Referral Order was introduced in April 2002, and is used with most young people pleading guilty for the first time in a Magistrates' Court. The Youth Offending Service, working with trained members of the community, victims, businesses and other partners, tailor a package of interventions, reparation and other activities to deal with the offender and the offence.

The Assessors commented that the Referral Order Scheme is "very strong on creative partnership working and good evidence [was] provided of how the Scheme is involved in innovative developments. Clearly defined processes have been put in place and are managed imaginatively for the benefit of young people, victims and the public. Regular review has resulted in improvement in the way things are done. Community involvement has been well developed and community partnerships put in place. Provides an excellent platform for sustained improvement in the future".

## ISSP Football Tournament

Going back in time, Sunderland Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) arranged a tournament at Silksworth Sports Centre in September 2002. Invited were participants from community education/training providers, including Solutions, ETEC, YMCA and Springboard. The YOS also had a team in addition to the ISSP team.

The tournament was a success in its own right, and it has led to a team being entered in a local 5-a-side league. Team members consist of young people on ISSP and Programme staff, all of whom are committed to training and performance – win or lose!

Alan Donnelly, ISSP Manager, states that those involved are finding the whole experience enjoyable, and valuable lessons for life are being learnt. As Alan says "you win some, you lose some - it's the taking part that counts!"

## ISSP Award

At the Youth Justice Board Conference in November 2002 the YOS Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) won a Youth Justice Board Press and PR Award for proactive press coverage of the Programme. ISSP is a collaborative venture between Sunderland Youth Offending Service (YOS) and the Gateshead and South Tyneside Youth Offending Teams.

The media strategy was based on getting the programme up and running quickly, engaging with the media positively, and then dealing with press interest around ISSP. This has attracted a lot of positive interest that reflects well on the Programme, the YOS and the other Youth Offending Teams involved.

The feature selected for entry to the Awards was an article in Police Review. The article was a contribution to a six-part youth crime series and resulted in ISSP being discussed in a much wider youth crime context. The Police play a crucial role in ISSP, and the chance to address an audience of police officers was very welcome.

The invitation to discuss the South of the Tyne programme came through the YJB Media office. This shows how media interest has developed in relation to this Programme.



Above: Receiving the YJB Press and PR Award at the YJB Conference

# STOP Press!

## Staff Development – and a nice lunch too!

Judith Hay recently introduced the concept of lunchtime seminars for staff. Her idea was for staff to be briefed on key issues, without having to book themselves on half/full day courses. In exchange for giving up their lunchtime, staff receive a buffet lunch. Seminars are usually held on the last Friday of each month at our East Cross Street premises. Speakers to date include: Paula Telford from Kaleidoscope; Jo McDonald from the Barnes Unit; Katy Redhead from Complaints and Representations, within Social Services; Paul Hillier, Sunderland's Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, and; Hana Knotek, the Divisional Director for the Wearside branch of the National Probation Service.

Feedback from these meetings has been positive and they are proving very popular with staff. They have also recently been opened up to staff from the 'Leaving Care' and 'Keys' Projects. All of the seminars have provoked good debate and encouraged the sharing of information. The next seminar is on Friday 27 June between 12.30pm and 2.00pm. The speaker will be Julia Parr, the YOS Victim Liaison Officer. Ideas are being sought for future talks and suggestions are welcomed for speakers/topics of interest to staff. For further details contact Helen Dainton on 0191 553 7464.

## Final Warning ASSET Assessment

The Youth Justice Board has produced a new version of ASSET specifically for use with Final Warnings. This is now available for use within the Service.

## Cabinet Office Visit the YOS

Members of the Cabinet Office Partnership Programme visited Sunderland Youth Offending Service for three days in November 2002. The aim of this visit was about the public sector learning together, and the visitors were interested in conducting a case study on partnership working.

The visit proved to be a busy three days in the YOS and the visitors were put through a comprehensive schedule. They met with staff and young people, attended home visits and family meetings, visited projects, attended court and met Chief Officers.

The feedback from the Partnership Programme Members was very positive and encouraging. They described the YOS as a very open service with dynamic, enthusiastic and committed staff. Congratulations go to all involved in the visit and to the YOS staff as a whole.

## Mental Health Screening Tool

The Youth Justice Board recently introduced a new Mental Health Screening Tool for use in all Youth Offending Teams. Two successful days of staff training have already been delivered within YOS and further awareness sessions are to be arranged. Positive feedback from the training shows that staff have found it relevant and useful.

## Goodbye...

John Egan the YOS Referral Order Coordinator has been appointed as the Youth Justice Board's Regional Training Officer. John leaves the Service at the end of June on secondment, and with all of our best wishes.

## Artwork Put to Good Use

Artwork Produced by young people on the Positive Images Arts Project has been put to good use within the YOS. A range of 'user friendly' appointment cards has been produced to give to young people, instead of a letter. The cards display artwork from the recent scheme.



Below: Artwork from the Positive Images Art Project

## Contacting the Youth Offending Service:

For further information you can contact the Youth Offending Service at:

11 John Street, Sunderland, SR1 1HT  
Tel: 0191 553 7370, Fax: 0191 553 7381 or:

St Cuthbert's House, East Cross Street, Sunderland, SR1 1XB  
Tel: 0191 553 7300, Fax: 0191 553 7321

E-mail: [yos@ssd.sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:yos@ssd.sunderland.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.sunderland.gov.uk/yos](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/yos)

For all newsletter enquiries, please contact the Research, Policy and Information Team on 0191 553 7464

*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.*