



**Learning to avoid crime**

DfES backs preventative benefits of education **p3**

**Graham Robb takes the reins**

Interim chairman of Youth Justice Board appointed **p4**

**Making amends**

Restorative justice group will develop long-term strategy to bring benefits to more offenders and victims **p5**



# Work of substance

**Samantha Tett is one of the frontline workers in the secure estate's battle against drug and alcohol misuse**

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# When small gains take great efforts



We've got a bit of a substance misuse special in this edition of YJ. On p8 we take a look at this relatively unsung area of work. The YJB has since

2004 invested £8 million a year into custodial interventions. These are now engaging more than nine in 10 of the young people in secure establishments in England and Wales.

It's a tough area, and gains can be hard to come by. But with perseverance, the right approach – and the right funding – there can be plenty of positive outcomes.

On p13 we hear from Matt Hamer, a

substance misuse worker at Feltham Young Offender Institution, who outlines a typical day in his working life. There are some inspiring comments in Matt's diary, whose work is a testament to the power of intensive one-to-one work, and relationship building.

Next issue we'll be taking a look at volunteers within the youth justice system. Drop us a line and let us know your experiences and advice, whether you are a volunteer or whether you benefit from their time, skills and experience. ■

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## Pledge for Damilola



Photo: Daniel Craig

Young people at Cookham Wood Young Offender Institution mark the sixth anniversary of Damilola Taylor's death by vowing to never carry a weapon.

By signing a hand-drawn mural of the Peckham estate where Damilola died, they pledge to "respect life not a knife", so supporting the campaign led by the Damilola Taylor Trust. This is one

of many pledge walls found in libraries and youth clubs which are collecting thousands of signatures.

The local success is testament to partnership working between Cookham Wood YOI, Medway Secure Training Centre, Medway Council Children's Services, the police and the youth inclusion and support programme. ■

**[www.damilolataylortrust.org.uk](http://www.damilolataylortrust.org.uk)**

# Education and training plan to help reduce reoffending by young people

The YJB has welcomed the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) *Next Steps* document which sets out proposals to improve the provision of education and training for young offenders.

Following from the 2005 Green Paper *Reducing Re-Offending through Education and Skills*, the document will be of interest to those working in education both in youth offending teams and in the secure estate.

In the chapter on young people, the document places new emphasis on the preventative benefits of providing high-quality training and education to young offenders in both the secure and community environments.

It recognises that at present there is a strong requirement for children and young people who offend to achieve educational, as opposed to vocational, attainment and pledges to develop options in line with their needs.

On a strategic level, the paper proposes to make use of children's trusts, local area agreements (LAAs) and 14-19

partnerships to plan and develop education services to meet the needs of young offenders.

This includes a commitment to support and encourage regional and local youth justice services to work with partners in developing LAAs to support the achievement of the YJB's education, training and employment target.

The document also pledges to ensure the 14-19 curriculum developments, including an increased provision of vocationally based training, are made available to young offenders.

On an operational level, the paper's approach will consider how intensive mentoring and targeted support programmes, such as KYPE (Keeping Young People Engaged), can best operate within the context of the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS), the youth justice system and children's trusts. This will include a review of financial incentives such as the Education Maintenance Allowance.

Robert Newman, head of education

policy at the YJB, said: "The YJB has been working closely with the DfES and partner agencies to highlight the very different educational needs of young offenders and the proposals set out in this document are a big step forward."

The DfES has launched a follow-on consultation dedicated to the issues surrounding young offenders, building on these proposals. In early 2007 five issue papers will be published, dedicated to the current context and key areas of education and training for young offenders.

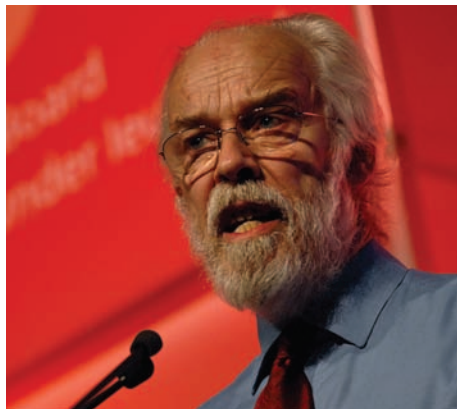
Stakeholders, including those working in YOTs, the secure estate and elsewhere within education and training provision, will be asked to comment direct to the consultation team. ■

■ **The full *Reducing Re-Offending through Skills and Employment: Next Steps* document is available for download at [www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning). Of particular interest to youth justice practitioners is chapter five, "Young People".**



Photo: YJB/John Birdsall. Social Issues. Photo Library. Posed by models

## Tributes paid on Rod Morgan's departure from YJB



Rod Morgan announced his resignation in January from the post of chairman of the YJB. Graham Robb, see right, has taken up the post of interim chairman.

Paying tribute to his work, chief executive Ellie Roy said: "Rod has been a tireless champion of youth justice and young people in his time at the YJB. He has been an inspiration, not only to staff of the YJB, but to all those working to reduce re-offending by children and young people and to protect the public.

"Rod showed immense commitment and energy during his three years at the YJB, something that has been greatly appreciated by practitioners and managers, both in YOTs and in the secure estate. I will miss his expertise and leadership."

Baroness Scotland, Home Office minister, said: "I would like to thank Rod warmly for the vision, strong commitment and enthusiasm he has brought to his role as chairman of the YJB.

"Under his chairmanship the YJB has developed innovative prevention programmes to divert children and young people from crime, reflecting Rod's commitment to keeping children out of the criminal justice system whenever possible. He goes with our best wishes for his future."

Morgan was a former HM Chief Inspector of Probation for England and Wales, a post he took up in August 2001. Before that he was Professor of Criminal Justice, at Bristol University, where he remains Professor Emeritus. He joined the YJB in 2004. ■

## Graham Robb takes up reins as interim chairman

The former head teacher writes about his appointment

I am delighted to have been made interim chairman of the YJB while we await the appointment of a permanent chairman.

Professor Morgan is a very hard act to follow, because of his detailed knowledge of the justice system, his commitment to prevention and to improving the experience of young people in custody. On behalf of Board colleagues I pay the warmest tribute to his powers of analysis, drive and passion. The large number of messages from practitioners sent to Rod when he resigned was a tribute to how he engaged with the issues and values of frontline staff.

My background is as a teacher and head teacher, and most recently working as an adviser to the Improving Behaviour team in the DfES, which looked at issues such as violence reduction, bullying and gangs issues. So I come to this role with an *Every Child Matters* agenda – how, for all children and young people, we can help them feel safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, contribute and ultimately be economically independent. This is a helpful context both for the process in which YOTs are engaged with the children's trust developments and Local Area Agreements, but also with the local partners in both children's services and community safety. I think that the *Every Child Matters* five outcomes also provide a useful context for thinking about work of the secure estate where staff have to work so hard to respond to the immediate needs of young people and provide learning programmes to prepare young people for resettlement.

I joined the YJB in 2004 after being introduced to the work of YOTs as a head teacher in Oxfordshire, learning about Safer Schools Partnerships and restorative justice in schools from the force of nature that is Sir Charles Pollard. I want to express my thanks to YJB West Midlands regional manager Lionel Smith

and his team for helping me learn about the youth justice system in YOTs and in the secure estate. I want to build on that in the coming months with targeted visits that will help me to understand specific current issues and inform what we do. Much of my work also has to be focused on work within Government during this critical phase leading up to the likely Governmental changes and finance planning processes.

In the end this work is about support for frontline staff working to give young people a chance to learn how to have a better way of managing themselves, their lives and their relationships. Here we all have a good story to tell about so many aspects of our team work and about the innovations which we have developed together. At the start of my work this is my key message – to adapt a phrase – communicate, communicate, communicate – because we must build further realistic confidence in what we do and what we want to do. This must be among partners such as schools, children's and health services, police and sentencers, among partners at all levels – from national to neighbourhoods, and among members of the public using whatever media works.

I look forward to meeting colleagues on visits or at conferences and wish you well in your work – because every child or young person whose life chances are improved by what you do is good for her or him, good for their family and good for us all. ■



## Panel to develop restorative approaches in youth justice



Photo: YJB/John Birdsall Social Issues Library. Posing by models

### Restorative justice: used in range of settings

The Restorative Justice Strategy Group has been set up to take forward the restorative justice approach in a range of youth justice settings. This follows the publication of *Developing Restorative Justice: a YJB Action Plan*.

The group is made up of YJB Board members, YJB staff, police officers, managers from youth offending teams (YOTs) and from the secure estate. They will continue to meet regularly to develop and implement project plans for extending and improving the use of restorative justice, to consult with partners and to develop a longer term strategy.

A consultation period for practitioners followed the launch of the action plan and many useful responses were received from YOTs and the secure estate, as well as

from partners such as the Restorative Justice Consortium and Nacro.

There were several key themes to the responses, including a need for further training, the importance of effective leadership and the need for flexible working to accommodate provision. In addition, there is the challenge of achieving culture change when the approach is introduced in a new setting, along with concerns over resourcing and the need for better communication of its benefits.

Rosemary Hartill, who chairs the strategy group, said: "The Board, many practitioners and our partners are committed to seeing wider use of restorative approaches. We know that it can play an important role in helping victims, in increasing public confidence and in reducing reoffending. It is already being used very effectively in a whole range of settings and we want to see this widened.

"The action plan was launched to demonstrate our commitment to deepening the use of restorative justice. We have had some excellent feedback which will inform our work. I am confident that this, together with the wealth of experience on the Restorative Justice Strategy Group, will help bring the benefits of restorative justice to more victims and more offenders." ■

### IN BRIEF...

#### East meets west in Wiltshire

Jihyun Park of the South Korean Ministry of Justice is on a six-month secondment with Wiltshire YOS. "I wrote to several places but the response from Wiltshire was the most interesting," she said, adding that she will be paying particular attention to the multi-agency approach the YOS takes to youth offending.

Ian Langley, head of Wiltshire YOS, said: "We have a lot of things we can be proud to share, but I also think there is plenty we can learn."

#### Director of performance

The YJB is looking for a director of performance who can help it help the youth justice system improve in areas such as end-to-end case management, and help share best practice and learning across a politically challenging environment. We don't just monitor for the sake of it: our work helps keep safe both the public and young people who offend or who are at risk of offending.

The director will head the new Performance directorate, which is responsible for driving through improvements across the regions in England and across Wales. ■

■ **Go to [www.yjbfutures.co.uk](http://www.yjbfutures.co.uk) to find out more. The closing date is Friday 16 March, at noon.**

## How well are we doing?

A new corporate identity, new email information bulletins for core practitioners, even a new look for YJ – the YJB has certainly made some changes over the past year. But how well are we meeting your needs?

"Two years ago we undertook our first stakeholder survey to find out what people thought about the YJB as an organisation and what people understood our priorities to be," explained Sean Larkins, YJB director of

communication. "The results were mainly positive but wholly illuminating and we changed many things as a result. It's now time to look again at how we're doing."

The YJB has commissioned an independent market research agency, Burns & Company, to conduct a confidential survey among a broad cross-section of stakeholders. The company will be contacting a sample of people over the next few weeks to request an interview.

The research will be totally independent, confidential and anonymous and it will be carried out under the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society. This means that the YJB will never know who has been contacted, and will not be able to attribute responses to individuals. ■

■ **If you have any questions, email [sean.larkins@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:sean.larkins@yjb.gov.uk), or research manager Sam Davis, on [sam.davis@coi.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sam.davis@coi.gsi.gov.uk)**

# The case for multisystemic therapy

By Geoffrey Baruch, director of the Brandon Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy for Young People

Multisystemic therapy (MST) is a short-term, home-based intervention that aims to reduce reoffending among high-risk young offenders – and decrease costs by reducing the use of custody.

Developed and evaluated by psychologists from the Medical University of South California, it uses the strengths of young offenders and their parents to enhance relations between them, between the young person and their peers, and to improve school performance.

Research in the US has found re-arrest rates in MST cases 25% to 70% lower than in controls. Significant savings in policing, court and custody budgets have also been demonstrated – MST can reduce days spent in custody by 47% to 64%.

Each therapist has a caseload of up to five families, and each team treats a maximum of 50 families per annum. An MST therapist is available to a family 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and usually visits three times a week, interspersed with telephone contact, although the intensiveness reduces

as treatment goals are met.

An MST intervention lasts between three and five months and, unusually, no follow-up help is provided. The objective is to empower parents and young people to take responsibility for making and maintaining gains.

Cambridgeshire Youth Offending Service successfully introduced MST in 2001 as part of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme. The Brandon Centre, in partnership with Haringey Youth Offending Service and Camden YOT, started the first UK randomised controlled trial of MST in 2003.

An MST team usually consists of three or four therapists, a supervisor and an administrator, and costs £250,000 a year. Therapists must have:

- a Master's level qualification in counselling psychology or a qualification in social work
- considerable experience in administering structured behavioural programmes
- the ability to work with young offenders and families in non-clinic settings.

MST training lasts for five days. There are also quarterly refresher sessions, and a weekly consultation with an MST consultant to discuss cases.

The main aim of the Brandon Centre trial is to evaluate whether MST is more effective than current services in reducing persistent youth offending in urban settings in this country. A secondary goal is to learn whether MST is effective when given by trained therapists who were not involved in its development. Definitive findings should be available by 2009. ■

For more information go to [www.brandon-centre.org.uk](http://www.brandon-centre.org.uk)



Photo: Daniel Craig

Baruch: MST can reduce custody

## Secure eMail beats expectations and saves money

The use of Secure eMail (SeM) instead of fax, in three months from October to December last year, saved the youth justice system more than £77,000. This factors in the time and resources it would have taken to send faxes and wait in the phone queuing system for the YJB placements team.

Success can also be seen in the more

efficient practices now taking hold across the youth justice system. The uptake of SeM by practitioners in the placements process has meant targets for its use have been exceeded and valuable time saved in administration.

There are benefits for many people: the YJB's placements team even has space for an extra pot plant now that they've thrown out their bulky fax machine. On January 22, the team switched off the fax for the last time.

For the few who still do not use SeM or are awaiting some system changes, the placements team does have a mechanism that converts faxes into an electronic format so no information is lost.

Katherine Simmons, placements manager, said: "Removing the fax from Placements allows us to work far more efficiently. People who may still need to send faxes can do so, but they're converted automatically into a format

that we can read on our computer system. This also gives us a fail-safe system in the unlikely event that SeM has a temporary glitch."

Wiring Up Youth Justice, the YJB's programme of change through information and communications technology, is set up to improve the way practitioners use and share information, making it easier to work together and support effective risk-based management of young people to reduce offending and reoffending. SeM is one part of this.

Indeed, the success of using SeM for placements is being pushed further in trialling SeM to replace the yellow envelope system that transfers essential documents about young people from court to the secure estate. ■

To learn more about Wiring Up Youth Justice, email [ict@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:ict@yjb.gov.uk)



Photo: Daniel Craig

Secure eMail: say goodbye to faxes



# Turning lives around

## A profile of a youth offending team's police officer

PC David Lambourne joined Kent Police when he was 19, and has served with the force for over 30 years. He is now based at Medway YOT, where he arranges and facilitates restorative conferences with young people on Final Warnings.

He started out as a shift officer in Rochester, but soon became a local beat officer: "It was about tackling every day problems, such as low-level anti-social behaviour, thefts and criminal damage. I found it satisfying being able to respond to local people, who knew me and I knew them, and to help them in what ways I could," he says.

After working as a response officer in Borough Green, he joined the Sevenoaks community team, where he attended local schools and gained his first experience of working with young people. "In those days, the local beat officer would do all sorts of things. I gave talks on things like stranger danger, road safety and the consequences of crime – it was a good experience."

PC Lambourne joined the CID in 1993 as a detective constable, where he worked on cases involving adult and young offenders. It was then that he decided that he decided to join the newly formed West Kent YOT. He did so in April 2000, transferring to Medway YOT in October 2005 as the permanent police liaison officer. He now acts as a link between the YOT and the police, and is a contact for individual officers, social workers, YOT staff, young people and their families.

"I make sure that everyone with an interest in a youngster is kept up to date," he says. "I collect intelligence from young people and YOT staff, which I then feed back to help prevent and detect crime."

He deals with all young people issued a Final Warning, completing *Asset* interviews and referral procedures, and often will be asked to talk to a young



person to help them realise the seriousness of their actions.

One of his greatest contributions is his skill in using restorative justice techniques, having trained in them at Warwickshire University in 2001.

"Restorative justice is not right for every young person. However, I know that it has been very successful in many instances in which I have used it, and it can be an extremely powerful experience, helping to stop reoffending."

PC Lambourne uses restorative justice to help the offender accept responsibility for their actions, to discuss the consequences, talk through their offending behaviour and the motivation behind it, and as a means of repairing relationships.

"I have to use my discretion, and that, I suppose, is part of the skill, knowing from speaking with an offender and their victim whether they would benefit, and then trying to bring them together."

There is an excellent take-up of restorative conferences by victims, many of whom state that they felt that the experience was positive. He has used the technique to tackle offences including theft, minor assaults, criminal damage, shoplifting and bullying.

"What is surprising is that the vast

majority of victims take part not to get an apology or to inflict punishment, but because they think that it will help that young person turn their life around, and prevent them getting in trouble in the future. I think this a sign that people are willing to forgive a youngster their bad behaviour, as long as they learn from it." ■



PC Lambourne: preventing future trouble

Photos: Fergus Burnett

# Investment of substance

**Substance misuse is a significant risk factor for children and young people who offend or commit anti-social behaviour. That's why, since 2004, the YJB has been investing £8 million a year into custodial interventions to tackle drugs issues.**

A little-reported aspect of the YJB's work is its funding of substance misuse services for children and young people in custody. These interventions are engaging 92% of young people in custody.

The reasons for dedicating so much time and resources to substance misuse interventions among young offenders are simple. First, research commissioned by the YJB in 2004 shows that young people in the youth justice system are more likely to have used drugs than other young people. And while there is no evidence of a direct causal link between substance misuse and offending for young people, it is known that there are strong links between substance misuse and offending for those over 18 years. So it is essential – for young people and their families and the whole community – to provide young people in custody with services to support them to make positive changes to their substance misuse.

This same research led to the creation of *National Specification for Substance Misuse Services for Juveniles in Custody*, which sets out the YJB's expectations for substance misuse services in custody and the community, and acts as a basis for evaluating schemes. A review was conducted in the wake of the 2004 study, and it was found that counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare (CARAT) teams within the Prison Service were not addressing the specific needs of young people, and the particular challenges they presented – for example, in respect of alcohol misuse.

"CARAT teams were simply not designed for young people," says Bill Kerslake, YJB head of policy for health and substance misuse. "That's why the YJB has dedicated such a substantial chunk of its substance misuse budget to creating services specific to the needs of young people in custody, creating, in effect, the biggest integrated high-quality substance misuse service in the country."

Joe Sheppard of the Prison Service's Women and Young People's Group leads substance misuse interventions within young offender institutions. His team consists of 140 workers across 18 establishments. As a drugs co-ordinator in the North West, Sheppard saw first-hand the limitations of substance and assessment interventions delivered through CARATs that were not "child-friendly." "The YJB resources



**Tett: substance misuse game at Oakhill STC** have helped create ways of working more appropriate to young people, with the stress on education, and one-to-one work," Sheppard says. "Every young person is assessed for substance misuse as soon as they enter custody. The first five days are crucial: that's when we can really break down barriers."

Staff persist in trying to engage with the young person. "We won't take no for an answer," says Sheppard. "We aim to see all our young people regularly, and to engage them all. If they refuse our help one day, we're



**Kerslake: "substantial budget"**

Photo: Daniel Craig

back the next."

Sheppard says the advantage of the custodial setting is that, unlike many community interventions, services can work at more flexible times. Having a literally captive audience means staff can have greater and more consistent input with the young person.

A big step forward for Sheppard is the improvement in resettlement. "The money has meant that, working with

and her own views regarding future treatment. "This ensured a partnership approach and a seamless resettlement into the community," says Tett. Throughout, YOTs were kept informed of the young person's progress.

Following her release, the young woman has continued to engage with community support services. She has not reoffended and is not using illegal drugs. She has also moved into

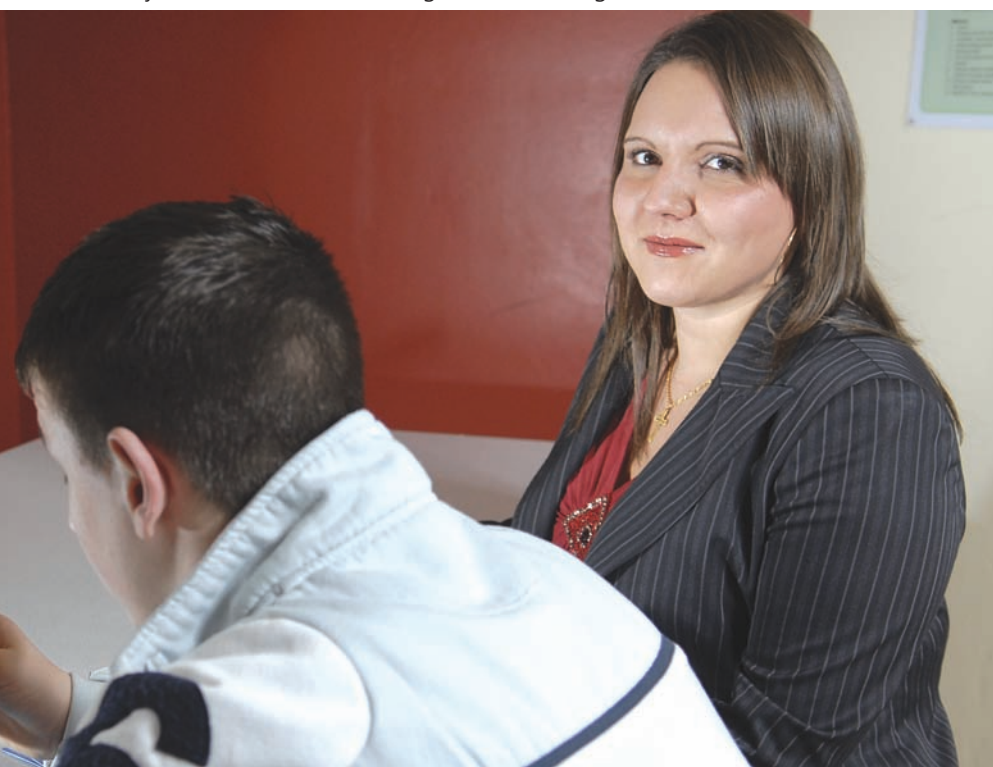


Photo: Fergus Burnett

the youth offending team (YOT) and the YJB's Resettlement and Aftercare Provision scheme, we can do more to give the young person a survival kit when they leave."

The emphasis on initial assessment, partnership-working and resettlement are common themes. Samantha Tett, drugs strategy manager at Oakhill Secure Training Centre, quotes the case of a young person with significant heroin use. She received an initial assessment, which incorporated previous evaluations made by her YOT,

independent accommodation, and is looking for employment.

YJB-funded interventions are also having an impact in secure children's homes. Barbara Rutherford, deputy manager at Sutton Place Secure Children's Home in Hull, says: "We have been able to upgrade our existing health worker, who is also a substance misuse specialist, from part-time to full-time. We've also been able to extend GP provision – having our own GP on stand-by now for any emergencies."

The children Sutton Place deals with



**Never Going Back: a still from the YJB's substance misuse DVD**

are particularly vulnerable, and have often been the victims of abuse. YJB funds have helped Sutton Place extend its service, enabling them to work more closely with the local authority's children's provision and adolescent mental health services. "A lot of these children are using drugs to self-medicate, and it's often impossible to distinguish between substance misuse for recreational purposes, and children who use substances to self-medicate because of mental health and well-being problems. The funds have enabled us to tackle the issues, and help our children prepare for life in the community – to become more resilient," says Rutherford.

There is still a great deal to be done. But current approaches are proving effective. As Sheppard says: "It's about getting in there, educating young people and listening to their concerns. It is about supporting tomorrow's adults around the risks of substance misuse."

An evaluation of YJB-funded custodial substance misuse services is due for publication in the summer.

With support of substance misuse providers in the secure estate, YJB is developing and piloting new guidance on the clinical management of substance misuse for under 18 year olds which is due for completion late 2007 and is also piloting an improved screening and assessment methodology also due for completion in 2007. ■

■ **To read the YJB's Strategy for the Secure Estate for Children and Young People: Plans for 2005/06 to 2007/08, together with the recently published Update on the Strategy for the Secure Estate for Children and Young People, visit the YJB website at [www.yjb.gov.uk](http://www.yjb.gov.uk)**



# The perils of conditioning

By Lindsay Whitehouse, deputy governor,  
Werrington Young Offender Institution

Within the Prison Service the term “conditioning” is used to describe the behaviour of some prisoners. This term relates to behaviour within a prison setting that seeks to change the boundaries of what is acceptable behaviour and what is unacceptable. In the high security estate, which houses adults convicted of very serious offences, such behaviour is sophisticated and planned and often revolves around gang members and people convicted of serious terrorist offences.

In the juvenile estate this behaviour also exists and while it is usually instinctive and unplanned, it is still potentially damaging. In recent months I have noticed a significant move by trainees to target or condition female staff. The behaviour centres on use of sexually inappropriate behaviour and language.

Female staff can find themselves on the wrong end of loud shouting from cell windows, much of this shouting involving hurtful personal comments and references to various sexual acts.

Trainees also seek to display on their wall pictures of nude or semi-nude women. Some of the poses in these pictures are very suggestive and demeaning and have no place for general display, especially when staff are required to check those rooms every day.

Female prison officers who are required to carry out rub down searches of male trainees find that this is a situation that almost encourages our young men to move their bodies suggestively or make rude and lascivious remarks. In one particularly distressing case a young man sought to guide the hand of the searching officer towards his groin area.

Female teachers and group workers are often subjected to loud conversations, supposedly between boys in which they discuss various sexual matters.

The hidden message in respect of

conditioning seems to be that some of our young men are saying that they believe it is acceptable for men to talk and act in such a way that defines women purely as sexual objects. Indeed when one young man appeared in front of me on an adjudication, his defence was that any woman who works in a man’s prison should expect to put up with that kind of behaviour!

OK, so what are we doing about it? First, I closed down the whole prison for an hour to call a meeting of all our female staff to identify the scale of the problem and the impact it was having on our staff. Second, we have taken advice from Staffordshire Police and as a result have made three referrals for investigation with a view to prosecution for sexual harassment that could lead to additional time in custody.

We have a zero-tolerance policy for display of any inappropriate pin-up pictures or use of sexually explicit language and boys will receive a significant punishment if they deliberately flout this policy.

We cannot win this battle in isolation. I have spoken to the mothers and sisters of some of our worse offenders and told them exactly what their sons and brothers have been saying to female members of staff. The look of abject horror betrays their feelings.

What I find particularly interesting is that there is very little racially explicit language or abuse from this group at Werrington. However the battle in respect of sexually abusive behaviour cannot be won until all adult males share the responsibility for making it clear to boys who are struggling to make the transition to manhood that respect for all aspects of diversity is what makes us human. ■

■ **Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this column?**  
Email [hugh.perry@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:hugh.perry@yjb.gov.uk)

## IN BRIEF...

### Big Push Forward

Northamptonshire Youth Offending Team (YOT) has joined forces with Sustainable Transport, the Rainer Foundation, Northamptonshire Police and Halfords on a new project called The Big Push Forward, conceived under the county’s local area agreement working.

The scheme involves young people serving out their community payback hours, as part of a court order, repairing bicycles acquired by the Rainer Foundation and the YOT. Once refurbished, the bicycles are donated to community groups and good causes. Darren Carson, reparation co-ordinator at the YOT, said: “The project has proved extremely popular with young people. It allows them to develop mechanical skills and the satisfaction of knowing that the end product will actually be used by someone.”

### Get recognition for your community programme

The Howard League for Penal Reform has opened the nomination process for its Community Programmes Award 2007, which recognises successful community programmes that deal with offenders.

To qualify, programmes need to be part of a community sentence, they should be rehabilitative and they should help prevent future offending. Programmes should involve users in planning and evaluation, and should encourage offenders to think about the consequences of their crime. They should also be cost effective, based on restorative principles and work collaboratively with the community. ■

■ **For more information about the nomination process, go to [www.howardleague.org](http://www.howardleague.org). The closing date is 1 May.**

# Opinion: Effective ASBOs

By Rachel Wieck, civilian anti-social behaviour officer for Devon and Cornwall police and a former business manager for Wiltshire Youth Offending Team

Ensuring the effectiveness of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) is all about timing.

If an ASBO is sought too early in a young offender's career, it can be unnecessarily harsh – too late, and the pattern of offending and anti-social behaviour can be so entrenched that the order fails to break the pattern of unacceptable behaviour.

Yes, in Devon, our ASBOs get breached, but we have repeatedly shown that an ASBO given at the right time can dramatically reduce the seriousness and frequency of a young person's anti-social and criminal behaviour. Chaotic lives have been brought under control, victims and communities have had extended periods of relief, young people and their families

have had a spell of stability, and criminal justice agencies have been able to divert their resources elsewhere.

The obstructions some ASBO applications encounter mean that, by the time the order is actually imposed, it is simply too late for it to be effective. This is what happened in the case of the two youths in Devon who received custodial sentences in 2006 for breach, and who have also been the most prolific post-ASBO offenders.

For example, postponing the imposition of an ASBO while waiting for a secondary Acceptable Behaviour Contract to be tried only delays the inevitable – the young person's behaviour remains unchecked, and agencies have lost valuable time in tackling the problem. ■

## Brush with the law

Five 13- to 17-year-olds have painted over a 200m-long, graffiti-covered fence in Perivale, west London, to make amends for their graffiti and criminal damage crimes. Their work was part of Ealing Youth Offending Service's scheme to get young offenders on court orders to make amends to the community and understand the consequences of their anti-social actions by doing constructive work that links to their crime.

According to Ealing Council, in their feedback most of the young people said they were concerned that their hard work and the freshly painted fence would be ruined by graffiti again.

Kari Pilkington, reparation co-ordinator at Ealing Youth Offending Service, said:

"As a result, we believe this new scheme will help to reduce re-offending rates and change their futures." ■



## YJB welcomes proposed housing and regeneration agency

The YJB has welcomed a government proposal to form a new agency that will focus on delivering regeneration and improving housing quality and availability.

Communities England is to bring together the functions of English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation, and a range of work carried out by the Department for Communities

and Local Government.

The YJB looks forward to building on its partnership with the Housing Corporation and to working with the new agency in order to address the accommodation needs of young people who offend or who are at risk of offending; in particular the provision of more supported accommodation for this vulnerable group. ■

## IN BRIEF...

### Getting together: How to achieve an integrated approach to youth justice practice

Nacro, the crime reduction charity, is holding its 17th annual youth crime conference on 26-28 March at the University of Nottingham. Discussions will focus on the challenge of establishing integrated practice between the increasing number of agencies contributing to youth justice.

The YJB is lending support to this event as it represents an excellent opportunity for front-line practitioners to learn about the latest developments in youth justice, exchange good practice and build a network of useful contacts.

■ **For more information and to book a place at the conference, go to [www.nacro.org.uk/about/diary.htm](http://www.nacro.org.uk/about/diary.htm)**

### YJB welcomes Care Matters

The YJB has welcomed the publication of the Green Paper, *Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care*, and supports the objectives of the paper to improve outcomes for children and young people in care.

The YJB believes that meeting the objectives set out in *Care Matters*, which was published in October 2006, would not only improve the quality of life for these children but could help contribute to reducing levels of offending and reoffending by the minority of children in care who are brought into contact with the youth justice system.

Go to [www.yjb.gov.uk](http://www.yjb.gov.uk) to read the YJB's full response.

### Chaplain appointed at Oakhill

Chaplain Peter Bannister was welcomed to Oakhill Secure Training Centre in February in a licensing ceremony performed in the centre's chapel. He will be working closely with both young people and staff at Oakhill, of all faiths and none, as part of the centre's overall responsibility for welfare and personal development. ■

News from the Bench

# More passion in PSRs, please

By John Fassenfelt, youth court magistrate



What is the link between pre-sentence reports (PSRs) and more passion, you may ask? Let me explain.

Magistrates depend on PSRs for their information about the defendant and the appropriate sentence to stop the young person re-offending. I cannot stress too highly their importance to the magistracy. They can never contain too much information. Indeed, many magistrates have suggested to me of a few areas that could be improved and enlarged.

The most frequent of these suggestions involves education. Too frequently there is a sentence that says that no information is available about the young person's education record. Then we hear from the defendant or their solicitor that they have not been in school for a number of reasons. Magistrates want to hear about schooling as they consider this part of their life to be vital. While, it is not as important as their family life it ranks a close second. This brings me onto their family situation. Sensitive as this may be, never be afraid to include as much detail as possible, especially if there are tragic circumstances as this may go some way to explaining their offending.

Magistrates also comment that they would like to see PSRs contain more

details about the proposed programme particularly about when it will be implemented, by whom, and how. This kind of information can often persuade magistrates to use community sentences especially when they can see a clear and well laid out plan with a firm timetable. Magistrates have the ability to read quickly and absorb information. Besides an extra page takes very little time to read but can well have a significant impact on the sentence!

Another common comment is the dislike of stock phrases like "custody is likely to put the defendant in direct contact with older, more criminally sophisticated offenders". Well, we do actually know that – and when we read phrases like this, we turn off. These word processor-type expressions should be used in the minimum. Let us have originality and with that will come passion. I am not giving away any secrets but when we read reports in the retiring room and we detect in the words used a feeling for the individual and a conviction in the proposals then magistrates are more likely to adopt the sentence. Perhaps this kind of language is lost, as the report has to pass through many hands: this may inadvertently sanitise it so it reads flat and lifeless when it comes before magistrates.

Magistrates develop confidence in their report writers and they also develop confidence in their court officers from YOT. Their role in assisting the court is vital and a good court officer can also show passion, particularly when they are experienced and well briefed. Any suggestions to replace them with less experience officers for cost savings reasons must be resisted.

So please those report writers and court officers out there get more passionate about your young people – their futures depend on it! ■

## Referral Order volunteers mark five years with own association

By the Association of Panel Members

Referral Orders will be five years old this year, and there is now a new organisation for volunteer panel members and other interested parties – the Association of Panel Members (AOPM).

Up to now there has been no national forum for sharing ideas – although several regions have organised their own events – nor a voice to represent our views and needs at regional and national levels.

We are passionately committed to applying the principles of restorative justice to help to re-integrate young first time offenders and their victims back into their community, and are looking to share ideas to make our work as effective as possible.

So far we've:

- submitted comments on the YJB's proposed training revisions for panel members
- started meetings with the Magistrate's Association, to explore areas of mutual interest
- begun to plan for our website, newsletters and conference.

We'll soon be inviting every panel member in every YOT – and co-ordinators and other professionals – to join up, but in the meantime we need a few more helpers to join our website and newsletter team, fundraising team, national conference organising team for late 2007, and our team of regional representatives. ■

■ **If you can help with any of these, or would like to know more about the aims of AOPM, please email [yesicanhelp@aopm.org.uk](mailto:yesicanhelp@aopm.org.uk) or write to: AOPM, 15 The Aberdeen Centre, 24 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA.**



### ...a substance misuse worker

**Matt Hamer is a substance misuse worker at Feltham Young Offender Institution, one of the largest and busiest secure establishments for children and young people in the UK. He came to the substance misuse team at Feltham after working for four years within a community mental health service in Hillingdon.**

**07:30** I usually start the day by compiling a list of all the boys who left the prison to attend court the previous day and which ones returned. Today's list shows that six boys were transferred, four did not return from court and that seven new boys arrived at Feltham last night. I do this list daily as it helps Lynne – the administrator for the young person's substance misuse service – establish which clients we have lost. I've lost two boys: one was bailed from court and the other transferred to Huntercombe.

**07:45** I complete the transfer issues for the boy that went to Huntercombe. This makes life easier for the young person as Huntercombe can simply continue his substance misuse work from the point where I left off.

**08:25** It's time to call the residential unit to check that the young person I booked for a one-to-one session is ready to come up. Good news – he's ready for me, so I go down and pick him up and bring him back to our one-to-one room.

**09:45** Had a great session with "Charlie" exploring his alcohol use. We completed an alcohol work pack together as Charlie is unable to read. Sometimes clients' literacy levels are quite poor so we use a variety of interactive and visual media to assist engagement. Charlie was fascinated by our jar containing a pickled liver. He's been drinking since he was 13 and it's generally what has led to his offences. I've booked another session with him next week and he's agreed to do some drawings for a comic based around substance misuse that the team are designing. We encourage all boys to contribute to the service through their ideas, drawings, stories and poems. I write up the session in Charlie's case

notes and update his care plan.

**10:30** My colleague Clare calls me to do induction with her. We always see all new boys that arrived the night before and complete an initial screening on substance misuse on the induction unit. I initially assess four boys, one of them is so tearful and upset about being here that I contact outreach to give him some additional support. Once again, I write up all the details of the boys I've seen.

**11:30** Complete a form for my client's DTO meeting tomorrow and make a call to Reducing Re-Offending to speak to the client's offender supervisor and update her on progress we have made. Charlie's YOT worker and mum are coming to the meeting tomorrow which is good news as we can help his mum identify some of Charlie's triggers before he goes out on a bender. Charlie really wants to stop drinking but will need intensive support from his family and the YOT on release.

**12:30** Hooray! It's lunch time. I eat my lunch at my desk and have a laugh with the rest of the team.

**13:00** It's time to call round the units to let them know that Dana and I will be coming down to pick up the boys for a group work session. We are doing Tier One Substance Awareness with six boys. It's amazing how little boys know about the effects of drugs: they know how to take them but really don't understand the effects and long-term damage they can cause. The session is very lively and all participate well, using their own experiences and stories of how things went wrong. We finish off the session with the *Never Going Back* DVD. This shows a young person released from custody and how things all go wrong when he overdoes things on his first night

out with his friends. The boys love the DVD and can really relate to the language, style and story. One says: "That's just what happened to me last time I got out." After we drop the boys off, it's time to document their attendance in their case notes and print off the certificates for attending the group. The boys love certificates: quite often it's the first time they have ever received something telling them "well done".

**15:00** I walk around the units and drop in on five of the young people on my caseload, delivering two work packs and have an interesting discussion about steroids with another on my way. It's useful just having a walk-about, it stretches my legs and it's a good feeling having the boys come up to me and just talk. Two of the boys I met just want to talk about what happened on *EastEnders*, but it's still communication and helps to build a relationship.

**16:00** One of my young people has asked to see me. He says: "I've finished my cannabis work pack." He hands me a crumpled work pack and says he couldn't wait until the next session to give it to me. He's done really well and completed everything, so I print off his certificate and laminate it.

**16:45** I've booked all my appointments for tomorrow, cleared my emails and called back one of my young people's YOT worker to update him on what work we've completed. I shut my computer down, put my files away and put on my coat. I've just got one last stop to make on the way out. I drop on the unit and ask to see John. I tell him that his work pack was excellent and his face breaks out into a smile that gets even bigger when I hand him his certificate. I've made his day and he's just made mine. ■

# Updates made to practitioners' website

There have been a number of important recent updates to the Practitioners' area of the YJB website.

The new YJB Counting Rules for 2007/08 are now available, as well as an updated frequently asked questions – FAQ – page on their use. The *English and Welsh Youth Justice Plan* guidance documents and templates were also published in January. These are all available within the Monitoring and Improving Practice section – [www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/MonitoringandImprovingPractice/](http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/MonitoringandImprovingPractice/)

The YJB has also made all *Onset* forms available in Word format, so they may now be downloaded and completely electronically. Visit the assessment pages at [www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/Assessment](http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/Assessment).

Finally, there has been an important update on the revision of Panel Matters, the initial training programme for youth offender panel volunteers. Visit the "Working with Volunteers" page within the Workforce Development section for the latest news



on how and when the YJB's guidance and training will be rolled out to YOTs and the secure estate. Go to [www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/WorkforceDevelopment/WorkingwithVolunteers](http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/WorkforceDevelopment/WorkingwithVolunteers). ■

## Apply for the Alliances Awards

Do you operate a youth justice alliance? Does your project exemplify the best partnership working to tackle offending and reoffending?

Entries to the Youth Justice Alliances Awards are welcomed from any project or alliance that sets out to improve community integration; enables offenders to carry out unpaid and reparative work; helps young offenders get into employment; improves public protection; or supports victims and restorative justice interventions.

There are three categories:

- Best corporate alliance
- Best civic society alliance
- Best faith and voluntary sector alliance.

Winners will receive an award and the use of a special YJB winner's logo for stationary. Winners will also be guests of honour at a gala dinner to be held at the youth justice service managers' conference on 14 May.

Entries are welcomed from local and national faith, voluntary and community groups and organisations.

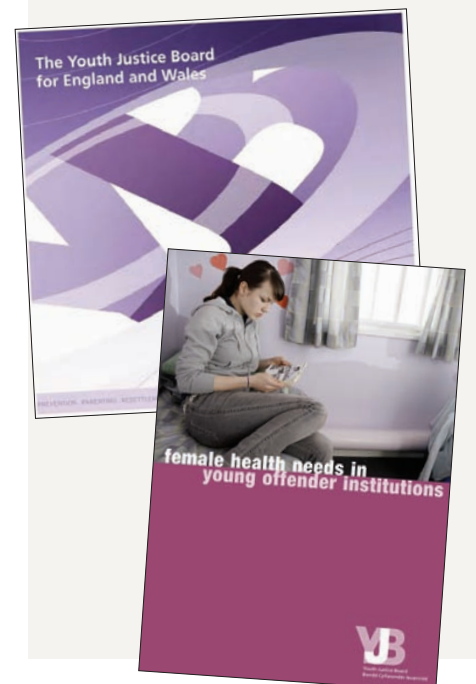
For full entry details see the September/October 2006 issue of *YJ*, available online at [www.yjb.gov.uk/publications](http://www.yjb.gov.uk/publications). ■

■ **Write to: Youth Justice Alliances Awards 2007, YJB, 11 Carteret Street, London SW1H 9DL.**

## Publications ready to order

In recent weeks the YJB has released a number of publications for youth justice practitioners:

- **Corporate brochures** – this new series covers a range of information about the YJB and the work it does. The YJB has recently released the *Accommodation, Custody, Parenting and The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales* brochures, with more titles being released in the coming weeks.
- *Female Health Needs in Young Offender Institutions* covers research from Oxford University's study to identify the health needs of 17-year-old young women held in the secure estate, and to determine appropriate models of healthcare provision.
- *Update on the Strategy for the Secure Estate for Children and Young People* provides information on the YJB's progress in delivering the Strategy for the Secure Estate for Children and Young People. ■
- **These and other YJB publications are available to order or download from [www.yjb.gov.uk/publications](http://www.yjb.gov.uk/publications) or from the YJB order line 0870 120 7400 or fax 0870 120 7401.**



# Peter Clarke, children's commissioner for Wales, dies

Peter Clarke, the children's commissioner for Wales, died in January, following a struggle with cancer. He had been commissioner since March 2001.

Maria Battle, acting commissioner, said: "It is with great sadness that we have had to say goodbye to Peter, who established this organisation and worked so tirelessly to improve the lives of our children and young people. We all took strength from the tremendous courage that Peter showed in the face of his illness and from his continued determination to speak up for Wales' children and young people. He has inspired his staff to take his vision forward. For those of us who had the privilege of knowing him and of working with him, it will be no surprise to know that up until the end his thoughts were of the children and young people of Wales."

He was a keynote speaker at the YJB's Annual Youth Justice Convention 2005.

Before his death, Peter Clarke said: "I know that my team are committed to making sure that children and young people are protected, and their rights



Peter Clarke: tributes paid

and interests promoted, in the way that I would wish."

An online remembrance board is at [www.celebratingpeter.org](http://www.celebratingpeter.org) ■ [www.childcomwales.org.uk](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk)

## Ex-Board members receive honours

Two former YJB Board members were awarded the OBE in the New Year's Honours List, for services to youth justice.

Annabella Scott has worked as a youth court magistrate and as a volunteer with young people since 1975. In 1997, she served on the Home Secretary's Taskforce on Youth Justice, which advised on the youth justice reforms in the Crime and Disorder Bill (1998). The bill created the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, which she joined in 1998.

Joyce Moseley has worked with children and young people since 1968. Between 1991 and 1997, she was director of social services in the London Borough of Hackney. Since 1999, she

has been chief executive of the charity Rainer. As a member of the YJB from 1998 to 2004, she played a key role in the development of youth offending teams.

Nominations for the New Year's Honours 2008 will be sought over the next few months. Assistance is sought to identify deserving candidates working at the cutting edge of youth justice. ■

■ **Please contact Patrick Feely at the YJB on 020 7271 3135 or [patrick.feely@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.feely@yjb.gov.uk), if you would like advice on potential new nominations, or those made in the past, which have so far been unsuccessful.**

## How does it make you feel?

This poem was written by a young man who spent some time on remand last year. It was sent in by John Gaughan, team leader, of Powys Youth Offending Service.

*How does it make you feel  
When they slam your door  
How does it make you feel  
When you walk across a stone cold floor  
How does it make you feel  
When you can't cope no more  
How does it make you feel  
When you're locked up and your family's on tour  
How does it make you feel  
When someone's broken your jaw  
How does it make you feel  
When you have done time before  
How does it make you feel  
When you're in control no more.*

Send creative pieces by children and young people with whom you work to [hugh.perry@yjb.gov.uk](mailto:hugh.perry@yjb.gov.uk), or Hugh Perry, Corporate Editor, YJ, 11 Carteret Street, London SW1H 9DL.

James:

“I can read more words now.”

Sabrina:

“He now attends with a smile.”



Sabrina Qadir is a volunteer for Bradford Youth Offending Team and has been mentoring young people at the Ummid Project, which provides alternative education provision for 11- to 16-year-olds. She is a student on the Applied Criminal Justice Degree at Bradford University and has been volunteering since January 2006. Sabrina was recruited and supported by Nacro, the crime reduction charity. She was recently nominated for the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* award for outstanding commitment to volunteering, and attended a reception with the Prime Minister in December.

**James:** I first met Sabrina last September. I was at the Ummid Project because I have problems at school. I didn't go to school, I didn't like it – it was boring. As a result of me not going, I was excluded from school. I ended up

attending the Ummid Project.

I cannot read or write and I wasn't interested in learning. I met Sabrina and I felt at ease with her. I thought she was okay, I began to trust her and so I started to turn up at the sessions.

She helped me with my reading, but she didn't make me do it if I didn't want to. She didn't bother if I got things wrong and she has a sense of humour which is very funny. She has made learning to read and write more interesting and much better than school. I can read more words now.

I now have a portfolio of my work and I'm proud of it. I couldn't have done this without Sabrina.

**Sabrina:** When I first met James I realised that he was very shy, nervous, had little confidence in himself and had no motivation of doing any work with me. I knew this was going to be a challenge.

I spent time with him, building a relationship and trust. I began to do some very short reading sessions with him but soon he attended every session with enthusiasm to learn. I now meet James every week and my sessions form part of his lesson plan. He has made steady progress and now attends with a smile.

I initially applied to volunteer in January 2006 in order to gain experience of working with young people. Since then I have been helping at Ummid on a regular basis and I love it. I was surprised when I was nominated for the award and the opportunity of meeting the Prime Minister – an experience which I will always remember.

I am proud of the progress that James has made. He can now read, which has given him confidence and self esteem. ■



Photos: Roger V. Moody