

1. Feedback from YJB convention

I attended the annual Youth Justice Convention last week, it was great to be able to speak to central and other local government colleagues and listen to a wide variety of inputs. All the Leeds YOS staff have come back enthused, energised and full of ideas!

Of particular note were the input from Jeremy Wright Prisons and Probation Minister who promised a 'Rehabilitation Revolution' with a focus reducing re-offending rates within the YJS.

There were three headlines for Government policy:

a) Focus on incentives – payment by results will feature strongly, still promoting local accountability, LASPO funding is an opportunities for LAs to invest in alternatives, and a holistic approach was encouraged to tackling difficult problems through Troubled Families initiative

b) Giving victims a voice – Restorative justice action plan, establishing RJ on a statutory basis, satisfaction rates for victims very high through RJ run in parallel to CJ processes. The Government have estimated the cost of introducing RJ as £20m nationally which would be needed to support RJ across the whole system, and have promised they will find this funding if required to. They intend to extend the offer to all victims, then meet the demand. There is recognition that there needs to be high quality provision, and recognition that doing RJ badly is worse than not doing anything at all.

c) Focus on the youth secure estate – the Government recognise that there are fewer offenders but that too often these are prolific offenders with complex needs. There needs to be better outcomes, and reduced costs. The Government feel that there must be more that can be done for these YP when they are in custody to support needs and reduce reoffending. Will be a focus on providing better education provision for young people in custody. Resettlement consortia were flagged as the way to go, bringing together all the different agencies to support needs of young people.

Other highlights were Newcastle YOTs partnership with Northumbria University which was particularly impressive and the input from User Voice which included 2 young people from Leeds.

The best bit of the conference was the fact that **Leeds YOS won both the YJB Innovation award and the John Hawkins award for Innovation from the AYM in respect of the Working with Girls programme**, which was wonderful news and a fantastic recognition for all the staff involved in the programme!

Jenny Bright who is one of the lead managers for girls work will be attending the partnership meeting to talk about the programme.

2. Police and Crime Commissioner Update

The elections for the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner took place on Thursday 15th November. Turnout across West Yorkshire was 13.3%, with a total of 249,224 votes cast. The successful candidate was announced on Friday 16th November as the Labour Party candidate, Mark Burns-Williamson. Mr Burns-Williamson will hold office for 3.5 years, until May 2016.

Mr Burns-Williamson was elected to Wakefield Metropolitan District Council in 1998 and represents the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward. He became a member of the West Yorkshire Police Authority in 1999 before earning the position of Chair of the West Yorkshire Police Authority in 2003. In September 2009 he was elected Deputy Chair of the Association of Police Authorities.

He was elected Chair of the Association of Police Authorities in October 2011 before then being awarded an OBE for services to the Community and Policing in the 2012 Honours List.

Mr Burns-Williamson was established in post as West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner on 22nd November 2012. His key election pledges were to:

- Stand against the £100m Government cuts of around 2000 police officers and staff in West Yorkshire
- Keep Police Officers and PCSOs on the beat, not hand police work over to private companies
- Strong and swift action on antisocial behavior
- Be tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime, giving victims a greater voice
- Preserve operational independence of the police

Mr Burns-Williamson will have responsibility for:

- Appointing the Chief Constable and holding them to account for the running of the force.
- Setting out a five year Police and Crime Plan based upon local priorities.
- Setting the annual local precept and annual force budget.
- Making grants to organisations aside from the police (including but not limited to Community Safety Partnerships).

He will be constructively challenged and supported by a Police and Crime Panel (PCP). The PCP will have the power to:

- Require the Commissioner, a member of their staff or the chief constable to attend the panel
- Review the PCC's draft Police and Crime Plan
- Review the PCC's annual report
- Hold confirmation hearings for the PCC's proposed Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and deputy
- PCC.
- Deal with any complaints made about the PCC

On 5th December, the Home Office will announce the total national funding pot that will be allocated to Police and Crime Commissioners. This will then be disaggregated across each of the 41 local force areas. Early indications from the Home Office, suggest that cuts to the

various budgets which will become the PCC's pooled budget are likely to be cut between 20%-50%. Currently there is approx. £110,000 of YOS funding within the Police Authority budget

It is unlikely that we will get any clarity on what funding will be allocated to Leeds by the PCC until the New Year. However, Mr Burns-Williamson has indicated prior to the elections, that if elected as PCC, 2013/14 will be treated as a 'transitional' year, with local commissioning / funding arrangements remaining mostly unchanged from the current year.

3. Family Group Conference approach

Over the past year the YOS has had great success in adopting the Family Group Conference (FGC) approach under the banner of '**ReConnect**' with young people being released from custody and with burglary offenders.

A structured FGC intervention which includes the whole family can harness the family's own ability to manage a young person's behaviour constructively and positively. The model builds on the established successful framework for restorative conferencing with the aim of reducing numbers of young people committing offences.

Through a structured FGC approach, plans for young people and families include roles for key members of the family to sign up to. The work is intensive and time consuming but research indicates that the rewards are high.

FGC work to date: Over a 6 month period, 14 conferences have been completed in the YOS, 9 immediately following custody, 2 DTO licence and 3 family breakdowns. There are currently 10 cases in process including 4 custody cases and 4 burglary offenders who have been referred by the Police or Court.

Results to date are very promising: of the 9 custody cases, only 4 have re-offended since their ReConnect conference. The offending in 3 of these cases was of lesser gravity than the offence for which custody was initially imposed.

Evaluations are completed by the young person and their parents/carers at the final review and then again 6 months later. Comments that have been made at reviews include:

Young people

- *ReConnect has helped me and my family become closer and it has helped make the **overall house atmosphere a lot less tense** and everyone is relaxing more (score 8/10)*
- *It was alright because it got all my family to think what I need to do to sort me out (8/10)*
- *It has **helped me put things in place in my life** and I think it will help me succeed. It has brought us closer together and got us communicating better (9/10)*
- *ReConnect has stopped us from falling out, helped us communicate and helped me reach targets (10/10)*
- ***It's helped me because I can talk to my family about any problems I have and ask them for help any time I need it (10/10)***

Parents

- *It helped us to get on as a family and help each other (10/10)*
- *It has actually helped in the sense that I can manage to talk to my son and he can as well. **It's like we are starting to know each other again** (10/10)*
- *Felt awkward at first but was quickly reassured and things felt very easy. We talk a lot more and **I feel closer [my son] as an adult rather than just seeing him as a child** (9/10)*

- *It has been a process rather than an event. I like the way the **power and control was given to us as a family and enabled us to find solutions. I will keep referring to the plan** (8/10)*

Comments at the 6 month post conference review:

Young People

- *I though ReConnect was very useful. It helped us communicate better and I wouldn't change anything about it (9/10)*
- *It **helped solve some issues between me and my mum** (8/10)*

Parents

- *I would like to thank all those who were responsible in making my son realise that there are people who love him (9/10)*
- *The programme helped us to have a structure that needed to be followed and for [my son] to know what we expect him to do. **ReConnect helped us to communicate with each other and talk about what is expected from each of us** (10/10)*

4. DJ workshop / Dance United

The YOS delivered an intensive 6 week intensive project with Dance United over the summer period involving:

- YOS young people and other participants from HMP Askham Grange, Royds Secondary School and Mount St Mary's Catholic High School,
- Role models recruited from Northern School of Contemporary Dance and York St John University as well as an Academy graduate and DUY Performance Company member
- The secondment of 2 support workers (each working part-time throughout the 6 week project)

The project was based at Yorkshire Dance, the regional dance agency, with a performance event taking place at The Riley Theatre, part of the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. In addition there was a performance as part of the 'Big Dance' event in Millennium Square and the delivery of creative dance workshops in local primary schools. All the participants were put forward for a Bronze Arts Award.

We were impressed with the project with Dance United, and it was a positive, life enhancing opportunity for young people involved. An on-going involvement of the young people in the performance company is clearly a good reflection of the benefits they are getting from it. None of the young people involved have been involved in further offending since engaging with this project.

Following the completion of the Leeds project Dance United Yorkshire hope to:

- Invite young people to attend either the youth company or performance company summer school – depending in age and ability.
- Track the young people in 6 months to follow up on the impact of the project
- Offering further work and training opportunities to the artists who supported the project
- Plan and develop an annual 6 week project in Leeds – developing the partnerships created with the YOS, NSCD, Yorkshire Dance and HMP Askham Grange.

Copies of the full evaluation will be circulated with the paperwork for colleagues that are interested.

5. RJ Action plan

The Ministry of Justice last week set out their strategy to build access, capacity and awareness of restorative justice across the Criminal Justice System, in a Restorative Justice Action Plan, published at the start of International Restorative Justice Week.

The recent Joint Justice Inspectorate's report found that restorative justice in the UK was limited by 'patchy' availability across the country, gaps in access across the stages of the justice system and inconsistent quality of restorative justice being delivered. This action plan aims to tackle these limitations.

The MoJ have tabled amendments to the Crime and Courts Bill to give judges explicit powers to defer sentencing to allow restorative justice to take place. It is intended to address the major gap in the use of restorative justice between conviction and sentence. When the Bill is enacted, restorative justice will then be accessible at every stage of the criminal justice process, from initial arrest through to prison, for those victims and offenders who are willing.

The action plan probably has more focus around the adult system, however is interesting reading and available here:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/policy/moj/restorative-justice-action-plan.pdf>

6. ISS project

ISS are currently running a project with HMP Leeds called 'Make a Change' which brings together young people and carefully selected adult inmates. The staff are really pleased with the results to date which they feel have gone better than could have been anticipated. The focal point has been the development of individual timelines, showing key points in the lives of all parties. Each group member completed a timeline and explored the events that led to their offending and the consequences.

The young people and the adult inmates were so engaged in the sessions and each others stories, that YOS staff and the prison officers did not need to take the facilitating role anticipated. All group members presented very detailed and emotional stories and did not need any support. There were times when the adult inmates were close to tears explaining the negative consequences of their offending on themselves, their families and the victims and both members of staff have stated that they feel privileged to have been a part of the process.

The next two weeks will involve the young people and inmates undertaking reparation sessions jointly at the CRYPT. There will then be closing event on the 11th December where participants will be thanked and presented certificates, the inmates are being released on temporary licence for this part of the programme. We will be evaluating the programme and will be able to provide more details at a future partnership meeting.

7. Chair

This will be Tom Riordan's last meeting as chair of the partnership and I would like to thank Tom for his support to the YOS over the past few years. Tom has agreed to retain 'an interest' in the YOS and to lend support if needed in the future. The chair's role will be taken on by Councillor Jarosz and I am pleased to welcome Cllr Jarosz into her new role.

Andy Peaden
Head of Service