

**Strategic Plan for 2015-2020
Including
End of Year Review, April 2018,
and Priorities for 2018-19**



“In the expectation of further reductions in the level of public spending over the next five years and the resultant pressure on the budgets of all partners in our multi-agency services, our overarching priorities are to reinforce the message that youth offending teams work best when they are ‘owned’ equally by local authorities, police, Police and Crime Commissioners, probation providers and health, and to help ensure that they are led by enthusiastic and knowledgeable senior managers”

Gareth Jones, former Chair of AYM, March 2015



The Association of Youth Offending Team Managers (AYM) is the professional association for Heads of Service (YOT Managers) in Youth Justice, representing the vast majority of Services across England. As such we are a strong voice within and for the youth justice system. Our focus is always on the welfare of children and young people to successfully reduce offending. We deliver results through strong partnership working in the criminal justice sector and beyond.

See <http://aym.org.uk> for further information.



Our ambition for 2020:

In 2015 we stated that in five years' time we plan to:

- Be the “Go To” organisation for views and opinions from YOTs, with a louder voice
- Be developing and articulating policy based on research
- See our Membership continuing to grow, especially in London, North West and East
- Have a Members’ training programme developed into an annual calendar of events

Summary of Priorities for 2018/19

Our Priorities

To support our Members (Priority One) we will:

- Continue to produce Newsletters and Members' Bulletins monthly
- Run a major event to coincide with our AGM in June, and another event in the autumn in Derby with Unitas probably about working with the Secure Estate and training options.
- Offer a fifth cohort of the Aspiring Future Youth Justice Leaders programme in January 2019, in conjunction with Solace
- Offer a second cohort of the ILM7 Certificate in Leadership and Management, starting in September 2018, in conjunction with Solace
- Seek to develop further training and qualifications options with Unitas
- Work with the existing governance group for YOT Sector Led Improvement (SLI) and with the YJB to facilitate the move from YJB management to the AYM, along with adequate funding arrangements to ensure its continuity.

To influence the politics of youth justice (Priority Two) we will:

- We will continue to work closely with our major stakeholders, including the YJB, HMIP and AYM Members, to ensure our voice is heard nationally. We have regular meetings set up for with our stakeholders, which we will continue to prioritise.
- We will continue to work closely with our Membership to ensure that our response to government initiatives is constructive and evidence-based.
- We will continue to respond to national consultations to ensure the voice of YOT Managers is included in policy and practice changes.
- Our key priority will be to ensure that there continues to be a recognisable, multi-disciplinary youth offending service covering every local authority, and that governance and leadership arrangements are strengthened.
- We plan to consult with children in the youth justice system to ensure that our statements about where we stand as an organisation have their support.
- We plan to consult with AYM Members about 18-25-year-olds becoming part of the work of YOTs.

To grow and develop our organisation (Priority Three) we will:

- Continue to increase membership, and to leave the membership subscription unchanged for a seventh year.
- To continue to deliver the SEND Quality Mark and Quality Lead Awards in conjunction with Achievement for All, along with other SEND developments.
- To offer Sector Led Improvements to colleagues across the sector, to grow this work and actively promote their value to YOTs, their staff, governance, young people, families and communities.
- To formalise our long-standing relationship with YOT Managers Cymru, and strengthen our links to other professional bodies, such as ADCS.

Background

During 2014 we consulted widely with our Membership and some of our key stakeholders. We asked them their views about the future direction and priorities of the association. In summary Members said:

- We should demonstrate more explicitly what our aims are and how our activities relate to these aims. Many Members and stakeholders are unclear about our aims.
- Things around us are changing so rapidly that at some point in the next five years we should review whether our aims remain relevant in their current form.
- It's time to up our game and we should be confidently making our position clear on issues of national youth justice policy, commissioning research and developing training opportunities. These activities would be more of a priority for us than to be offering consultancy services to YOTs.
- We are the only organisation that can really speak with authority for managers in YOTs and there is much to be said for continuing as a stand-alone organisation. However, we should cautiously explore the additional opportunities that may be provided by entering into partnerships with other like-minded organisations.
- It is acceptable to introduce a modest increase in subscriptions to help us to manage the increased expectations of our Members.
- Our main source of income should continue to be Members' subscriptions, supplemented by income from events and courses. We should not risk our independence as an organisation by going after grants.



Out of this consultation we developed an analysis of our strengths and weaknesses and of the opportunities and threats we face. This has led us to a set of planned actions which we have grouped within the following three priorities:

PRiORiTIES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Priority One: Supporting our Members

Priority Two: Influencing the Politics of Youth Justice

Priority Three: Growing and Developing our Association

Priority One: Supporting our Members



'AYM provides a robust voice for YOTs and provides our organisation with a useful 'in' to the day to day practice issues which policy impacts on.' A major stakeholder, (2015).

'YOTs and YOT management are already being diluted. It is essential that the AYM remains distinctive to ensure YOTs are always on the agenda'. A Member, (2015).

What we said we would do in 2017/18

- Continue to produce Newsletters and Members' Bulletins monthly
- Run a major event to coincide with our AGM in June, and another event in Manchester in October, in conjunction with the Manchester Metropolitan University
- Offer a fourth cohort of the Aspiring Future Youth Justice Leaders programme in January 2018
- Offer a first cohort of the ILM7 Certificate in Leadership and Management, starting in May 2017
- Work with the existing governance group for YOT Sector Led Improvement (SLIGG) and with the YJB to facilitate the move from YJB management to the AYM, along with adequate funding arrangements to ensure its continuity.



What we achieved

- We delivered Newsletters and Members' Bulletins on schedule, each month. The Newsletter also goes out to non-AYM Members and wider YJ stakeholders.
- We also produced a Special Newsletter in March 2018 on SEND, and the joint Quality Mark and Quality Lead Awards with Achievement for All.
- We held a conference in June 2017 with our AGM, and ran a conference in Manchester in October 2017 in conjunction with Manchester Metropolitan University
- These attracted national and international speakers and were well attended.
- The feedback from the third cohort of the Aspiring Future Youth Justice Leaders was extremely positive and we are currently running a fourth cohort which began in December 2017.



What we plan to do in 2018/19

- Continue to produce Newsletters and Members' Bulletins monthly
- Run a major event to coincide with our AGM in June, and another event in the autumn in Derby with Unitas probably about working with the Secure Estate and training options.
- Offer a fifth cohort of the Aspiring Future Youth Justice Leaders programme in January 2019, in conjunction with Solace
- Offer a second cohort of the ILM7 Certificate in Leadership and Management, starting in September 2018, in conjunction with Solace
- Seek to develop further training and qualifications options in conjunction with Unitas
- Work with the existing governance group for YOT Sector Led Improvement (SLI) and with the YJB to facilitate the move from YJB management to the AYM, along with adequate funding arrangements to ensure its continuity.



Priority Two: Influencing the Politics of youth justice

Where we are now (beginning of five-year planning period, 2015)



'I think in the last 12-18 months you have 'punched above your weight' and by that, I mean as a small organisation you have managed to achieve a high visibility beyond the relatively small budget you have - I guess through a lot of work from Members and especially the committee - but it has been apparent and very good at raising the issues about children who offend'. A major stakeholder, (2015).

- Nominated board Members have taken on specific policy portfolios, and agreed a number of "where we stand" statements (see Appendix A)
- We have responded to a number of consultation exercises by various Government departments, and have consulted widely with Members before doing so.

- Our events have been run about four times a year and have attracted influential speakers who are keen to sound us out before going on to launch campaigns or undertake inspections.
- We have raised issues with Government such as the impact of devolved responsibility for the cost of secure accommodation.
- We are committed to an evidence-based approach to change and have worked closely with research projects that seek to assess the impact of prevention services and youth justice interventions.
- We have supported campaigns to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 years, to reduce the damaging impact of children's criminal convictions on their adult lives and to preserve places secure children's homes in preference to the development of a large secure college.

Where we want to be in five years (2020)

'It is helpful to have an organisation which is in touch with the latest research and latest thinking in the area of youth justice in order to support other external organisations like ours in our thinking.' A major stakeholder (2015).

'You will continue to need to have a clear articulation of your niche perspective - eg the voice of those working with children who get into trouble with the law.' Another stakeholder (2015)

Over the next few years we plan to move from being an organisation which responds to other people's ideas, to one which, on the basis of evidence gleaned from practice, puts forward its own ideas for further improvements in the youth justice system. At the heart of our influence will be our commitment to multi-agency intervention by well-qualified, well-supervised practitioners working in teams, and services that are valued by their local authority, their local police, health and probation providers. We expect services for young victims of crime, and young people who are at risk of exploitation, sexually or politically, to continue to be national priorities and we want to be at the forefront of developing and spreading practice experience of work in these areas.

What we said we would do in 2016/17

- We will continue to work closely with our major stakeholders, including the YJB, HMIP and AYM Members, to ensure our voice is heard nationally. We have regular meetings set up with our stakeholders, which we will continue to prioritise.
- We will continue to work closely with our Membership to ensure that our response to government initiatives is constructive and evidence-based. In particular, we will monitor and engage with the YJB to ensure the Taylor review actions in the MOJ response are acted upon.
- We will continue to respond to national consultations to ensure the voice of YOT Managers is included in policy and practice changes.
- Our key priority will be to ensure that there continues to be a recognisable, multi-disciplinary youth offending service covering every local authority, and that governance and leadership arrangements are strengthened.

What we achieved

- We have had regular meetings with the YJB, HMI Probation, HMTCS, and are regular contributors into national discussions about youth justice.
- We have responded to a number of national consultations during the year, and raised our profile with government and other bodies. These have included HMI Probation, ONS, the Lammy Review, Sentencing Council guidelines, NAAN, parliamentary committees, the Bar Standards Board, and NICE.
- We have had contributions by national stakeholders to each edition of our quarterly Newsletter.
- The Newsletter is sent out to a wide variety of YJ stakeholders, as well as non-member YOTs.
- We have encouraged effective YOT governance through the SEND project.



What we plan to do in 2018/19

- We will continue to work closely with our major stakeholders, including the YJB, HMIP and AYM Members, to ensure our voice is heard nationally. We have regular meetings set up for with our stakeholders, which we continue to prioritise.
- We will continue to work closely with our Membership to ensure that our response to government initiatives is constructive and evidence-based.
- We will continue to respond to national consultations to ensure the voice of YOT Managers is included in policy and practice changes.
- Our key priority will be to ensure that there continues to be a recognisable, multi-disciplinary youth offending service covering every local authority, and that governance and leadership arrangements are strengthened.
- We plan to consult with children in the youth justice system about our statements of where we stand on policy issues.
- We plan to consult with AYM Members about 18-25-year-olds becoming part of the work of YOTs.



Priority Three: Growing and Developing our Association

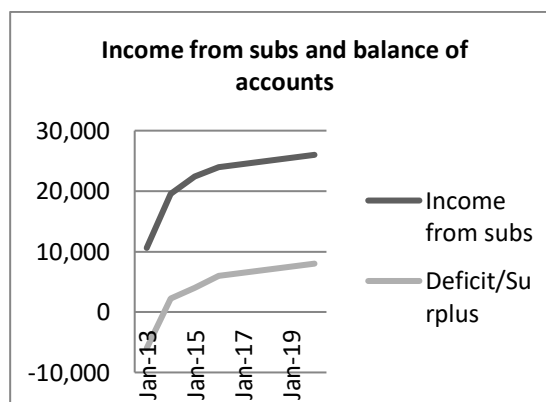
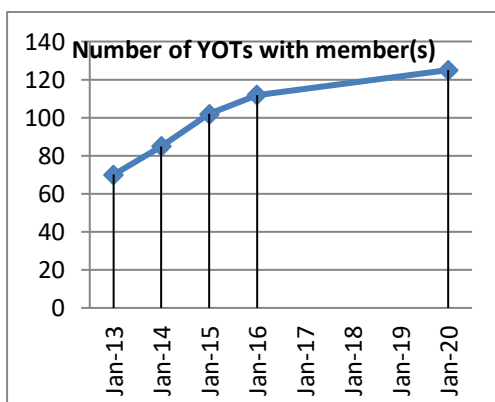
Where we are now (at beginning of five-year planning period, 2015)

- Our Membership has grown every year for the last three years and over 100 YOTs are now part of AYM.
- Subscriptions have been kept low- lower than they were five years ago, and have not increased for the last three years. Despite this, we have moved from financial deficit to a break-even position.
- We have maintained our financial independence: we do not receive grants or subsidies from any external organisation
- We have enlarged our executive group which now includes a regional representative from almost all the English regions.
- We have developed informal partnerships with the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services (CHYPS, now part of 'Aspire') and the NAYJ.



Where we want to be in five years (2020)

A lesson learned from Probation colleagues during their 'reform' process, is that every YOT manager who is not a member of AYM weakens the association's claim to speak on behalf of all. We aspire to have all Heads of Service as Members of the association, and all the regions represented around the table when the executive meets. We do not plan to increase subscriptions more than by inflation, and we would expect to generate any additional income that we need by selling places on training programmes and national events. We have no plans to significantly increase our expenditure, and will continue to rely on the goodwill of committed heads of service and their employer authorities, rather than paid directors, to ensure that the association is well led. We will develop partnerships with others where such partnerships can help to articulate a clear message about the value of YOTs. In particular, we want to work more collaboratively with our colleagues in Wales. Our projections on membership and income are shown below.



What we said we would do in 2017/18

- Continue to increase Membership, and to leave the Membership subscription unchanged for a seventh year.
- To deliver the SEND project over year 2, involving at least 35 YOTs in developing best practice. To promote the results to DfE in consultation with AFA and MMU.
- To offer Sector Led Improvements to colleagues across the sector, to grow this work and actively promote their value to YOTs, their staff, governance, young people, families and communities.
- To manage the transition of the SLI to AYM, and to pursue ways of ensuring its long-term continuity.

What we achieved

- We have continued to increase our Membership, and currently stand at over 90% of YOTs in England.
- We have had another highly successful year in developing the SEND agenda in youth justice. The DfE funding has now come to an end. However, our success has led to Achievement for All and AYM continuing the Quality Mark and Quality Lead Awards in SEND. We are also working to continue other aspects such as the Bubble.
- Over 50 YOTs have achieved the AFA/AYM Quality Mark and Quality Lead Awards,
- The YJB has devolving the SLI work to the AYM, with a YOT Manager seconded into the role to manage the transition.
- All nine regions now have representatives in place.



What we plan to do in 2018/19

- Continue to increase membership, and to leave the membership subscription unchanged for a seventh year.
- Sustaining and growing our membership.
- Reviewing our staffing infrastructure.
- To continue to deliver the SEND Quality Mark and Quality Lead Awards in conjunction with Achievement for All, along with other SEND developments.
- To offer Sector Led Improvements to colleagues across the sector, to grow this work and actively promote their value to YOTs, their staff, governance, young people, families and communities.
- To formalise our long-standing relationship with YOT Managers Cymru, and strengthen our links to other professional bodies, such as ADCS.

“I never fail to be impressed by the commitment of YOT managers to delivering improved outcomes for young people who offend. This is replicated in the work of the Executive who, on top of their already heavy workloads, take time to attend meetings, prepare papers, represent colleagues on national and regional groups and initiatives, and respond to the very many consultations we receive. I sometimes wonder how the AYM will cover all the work and am always pleased that we can field someone to assist.

“I have no doubt this coming year will be difficult for many of us; the strength of the AYM is something we should make best use of if we are to ensure change takes account of the diversity within the sector. I would like to say a big thank you for the ongoing commitment of all Members.”

Lesley Tregear, AYM Chair, June 2017



Appendix 1:

CURRENT AYM Policy Portfolio areas

<http://aym.org.uk/about-us/policy-portfolio/>

Policy area	Portfolio holder
Anti-Social Behaviour & OOCs	Andy Peadar
Child sexual exploitation	Lesley Tregear
Courtwork	Jessica Edwards
Custody	Jessica Edwards
Diversity	Amrik Panesar
Gangs	Brendan Finegan
Health	Mike Rees
Monitoring / Inspections	Gareth Jones
Parenting/Troubled Families	Ian Langley
Reducing reoffending	Hazel Williamson
Restorative Justice	Shelley Nicholls
Safeguarding	Amrik Panesar
Speech & Language	Diz Minnitt
Sport	Hazel Williamson

Role of portfolio holder

- To develop concise AYM position statement on portfolio area
- To keep Executive/Members updated on developments within portfolio area
- To deal with enquiries from Members/media/other interested parties
- Representing the AYM on appropriate national groups
- Ensuring another AYM Members can pick up the brief in their absence

Appendix 2:

'Where We Stand' statements

<http://aym.org.uk/about-us/where-we-stand/>

Where We Stand On...

Age of criminal responsibility

We believe the age of criminal responsibility at 10 years of age is too low and should be raised to at least 12.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

That such orders are necessary as a last resort for dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB). We support the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts as an effective way of dealing with ASB by young people which do not require court appearances/convictions.

Custody for young offenders

That the punishment of custody for young offenders lies in the loss of liberty itself and therefore should only be used:

- As a last resort
- Where the public have to be protected

Where young people have to be sent to custody they should be held in small local secure units close to their home.

Equality and Diversity

We believe that children and young people have the right to have equal access to all appropriate services within the youth justice system and must not be excluded on the grounds of age, gender, disability, ethnic background, skin colour, language, faith, health, social and economic backgrounds, sexuality or other prejudice.

Prevention of youth crime

Work to prevent young people from offending for the first time should be prioritised to prevent them entering the youth justice system and the cost of this to both young people themselves and society.

Restorative Approaches

We fully support restorative approaches and are committed to them being embedded in youth justice. These enable children and young people to accept responsibility for their choices and actions, and to reflect on how they interact together and find positive ways forward to prevent harm and conflict.

Victims

YOTs are committed to the welfare of the victims of crime; and will take their needs and perspectives into account when working with young people who have offended and/or committed anti-social behaviour. For example, YOTs will make contact with the victims of children and young people who have offended to seek out victim(s)

comment on their experience(s) and future interventions. The YOTs will work with these young people to encourage change in their attitudes/future behaviour towards known victims and to prevent further victimisation.

Children Young People and spent convictions

Young people moving into adulthood and beyond should not be penalised for having to declare all but the most serious convictions committed as a youth.

Youth Justice work

Should be undertaken by dedicated and specialist youth justice workers led by senior managers with substantial youth justice experience positioned at a senior level within local structures.
