

Newsletter

The Newsletter of the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers Ltd

May 2017

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“From the Chair”

Lesley Tregear, AYM Chair

Dear members, I am sure like me you have been busy trying to balance budgets and expectations of what those budgets can provide over the last few months. It was good to see that the YJB core grant was not reduced this year and I am sure we were all



surprised to see the small increase. However, let us not overlook the fact that the increase cost of secure accommodation and the loss of other grants, including that from NPS, has resulted in an overall loss of funding once again from the Ministry of Justice.



The appointment of Charlie Taylor to the Chair of the YJB was of course a surprise to most of us and I am pleased to say that I will be meeting with Charlie on 17th May together with other members of the AYM Executive Board. The AYM will be seeking to understand from Charlie his vision for community youth justice provision in the

future in light of the confirmation from the Secretary of State for Justice that she is committed to retaining YOTs, in variance to Charlie's proposals.

A stakeholder meeting to discuss the secure schools has unfortunately been cancelled due to the announcement of the general election. This is in itself not



surprising as ministers move into the pre-election period. However, the general election does raise issues for community youth justice in that we cannot assume a retention of the same political party in government nor, if the conservative government is re-elected, that ministers (especially the Secretary of State for Justice) will retain current roles.

The movement of the youth estate into the new HM Prisons and Probation Service is something that I am sure we are all concerned about and something the AYM would be keen to hear from members on any issues related to this. I am keen to ensure that the increased engagement of the AYM with the YJB is used to support improvements for young people in the community and in custody.



The AYM is also working hard to influence change in other areas, one of those being the changes in court provision and combination of youth benches, increased use of district judges and closure of youth courts. I was recently fortunate enough to help host a visit from Liz Truss to Warwickshire Justice Centre in Leamington and she was surprised to hear of these issues.



I took the opportunity to advise her of the importance of delivering youth justice locally, the cost to YOTs of not doing so and the increasing poor outcomes for young people associated with non-attendance at court. Please keep sending in your

concerns and issues associated with changes resulting from Ministry of Justice regionalisation agendas.

The AYM ILM courses continue to be successful and this month sees the inaugural group for Heads of Service which we are hoping YOT managers will find a real benefit. The Aspiring YOT Manager courses continue to deliver real benefits to the delegates, and hopefully the YOTs from which they originate.

Finally, I look forward to seeing as many as you as possible at the AYM AGM on 6th June in Rugby. Once again, we have a really impressive set of speakers so I am sure you will find the journey to the midlands worthwhile - I hope as usual Warwickshire can supply the sunshine....

Lesley is AYM Chair and Head of Warwickshire Youth Justice Service



AGM 2017 – Your Invitation

Please put the date of your AGM in your diary/calendar. It is being held in Rugby on **Tuesday 6th June 2017**. The morning will be a conference with some high-profile speakers, while the afternoon will be the AGM. There is a free lunch provided.

Our speakers will be:

- Colin Allars, CEO of the YJB
- DCC Karen Manners, who is the NPCC national lead on vulnerability
- Ian Acheson, who wrote a review on extremism in prison and community settings in 2016
- Marius Frank, on the SEND reforms

All are welcome, so come along and see how your Association is working for your benefit.

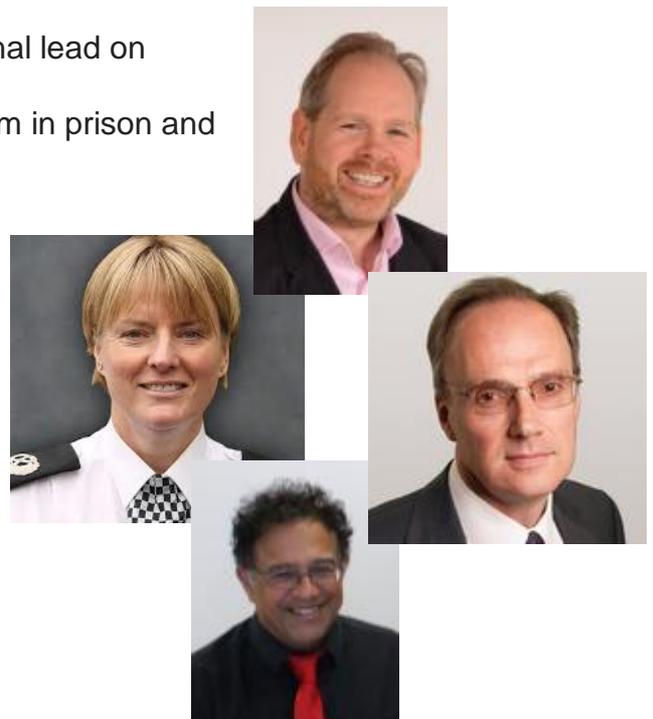
Arrivals are from 10.30am, and the venue is:



The Bloxham Centre,
8 Somers Road,
Rugby CV22 7DE.

Please book your place with
jon.obyrne@aym.org.uk .

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Consultations

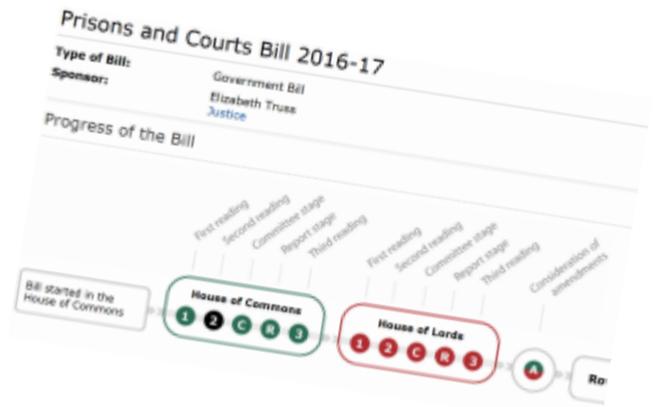
AYM responds to relevant consultations, ensuring the voice of YOT Managers are heard raising youth justice issues for children and young people.



We recently submitted our views on the NICE draft guidelines for child abuse and neglect. The guidelines were very positive, but lacked recognition of the needs and communication skills of older children, which we explained thoroughly.

We have also been working on a draft response to the Prisons and Courts Bill, which was due before the end of April. However, due to the recently announced general election this has been stopped, or to use parliamentary language, it is left to 'lie on the table'.

The latest news section of our website reports on consultations to which we contribute.



Free Workshops for Point-of-Arrest Diversion Schemes



The Centre for Justice Innovation (CJI) has been working with AYM for some years in promoting diversion schemes. The current landscape is financially precarious for prevention services, and so CJI highlight the evidence and help make the case for investment.

See <http://justiceinnovation.org/portfolio/supporting-youth-diversion/>

In May 2017, CJI are holding three workshops for practitioners involved in, or considering creating, point-of-arrest diversion schemes. These free workshops will be an opportunity to increase your knowledge of effective youth diversion practice, share experiences, and hear how you can communicate the benefits of your work.

The workshops are also CPD-certified, and will be held in:

- Winchester 16th May
- Rugby 18th May
- Leeds 25th May



To register, see: <http://justiceinnovation.org/portfolio/youth-diversion-practice/>

Views of Parents and Carers are Needed

Diz Minnit, AYM Lead on Speech, Language, and Communication Needs

'Bercow: Ten Years On' is a review of support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in England being conducted by I CAN, the children's communication charity, and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT).



In the UK today, over one million children and young people have some form of long-term and persistent SLCN that can affect their ability to learn, make friends and achieve their full potential. Around 60% of young people in the justice system have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). Research clearly shows that SLCN are strongly over-represented within the justice system.

This second phase of the review seeks to gather the views of parents and carers of children and young people with SLCN and will run from 20 March – 30 June 2017.



There are two ways of taking part in the inquiry:

1. I CAN and RCSLT are inviting contributions from parents and carers via a short online survey (closing 30 June 2017) describing their experiences of support for their child's SLCN.
2. An activity pack allows parents and carers to respond in a practical way, with the support of a familiar practitioner. This will help I CAN and RCSLT to capture the views of all parents and carers, including those who may not normally complete a questionnaire or who may need extra help.

For the survey and consultation activity pack see: www.ican.org.uk/BercowSurvey

For more information email Bercow10@ican.org.uk or sign up to the dedicated Bercow: Ten Years On newsletter at www.ican.org.uk/BercowNewsletter



Please Share Your Views on the Secure Estate



We want to use our voice to ensure the secure estate is run safely, in the interests of young people and increasing their life chances. Please let your regional representatives know your views (see list on final page), as AYM regularly speaks to inspectorates and government departments.

We know that custody has reduced significantly in recent years, largely due to the work of YOT partnerships, but there are still current issues such as:

- G4S appears currently unable to sell Oakhill STC, as explained at https://www.buzzfeed.com/emilydugan/g4s-is-trying-to-sell-a-youth-prison-but-cant-find-anyone?utm_term=.nlpyQrw3Qg#.faa7zVaLzI Many of our members believe this is evidence that privatisation of the children's secure estate is flawed.
- It comes on the back of well publicised negative issues at the other two STCs, and recent issues with increased violence levels reported by HMI Prisons, such as at Parc YOI.
- The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture has reported on young people in YOIs being locked up for nearly 24 hours a day, see <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-prisons-young-offenders-locked-up-24-hours-european-committee-for-the-prevention-of-torture-a7690626.html>
- In the meantime, the new Youth Custody Service at the MOJ has been created, see YJB Bulletin 79 <http://youthjusticeboard.newsweaver.co.uk/yots2/16yr7qw9d3jwoqpmmgxbrt?email=true&a=11&p=51718597>
- And the costs of remands to local authorities have recently increased.



Join Us



AYM currently represents over 80% of YOTs in England, and is the only national voice for YOT Managers and their views.

If you are not a member and would like more information about the benefits, please speak to your regional representative (see list at end of newsletter) or see <http://aym.org.uk/membership/application/>

Successful SEND Project Extended



As reported in our February Newsletter, the Department for Education (DfE) has extended its contract with our partners, Achievement for All (AfA), for a further year due to the success and progress made so far. The project supports the implementation of the SEND reforms in the youth justice system, which are crucial to reducing offending.

AYM and Manchester Metropolitan University will continue to work in partnership with AfA, and will build on the research, training and support delivered to YOTs and local authority SEN specialists in the first year.



Although fully funded by DfE, the contract is jointly managed by DfE, the Ministry of Justice and the Youth Justice Board. The contract managers have asked us to:

- Continue to develop our free, on-line training resource, the Youth Justice SEND Bubble, <http://res.afa3as.org.uk/YJBubble/ResourceHub/index.html> and explore how it might be made available to a wider range of personnel including panel members, police, prosecutors and the judiciary.
- Deliver a workshop to key staff in each of the establishments within the secure estate, raising awareness of the prevalence of SEND and the opportunities and challenges presented by the SEND reforms.
- Undertake further work with 35 YOTs and support them in achieving measurable improvements in their local partnerships' work with young people with SEND. We have been asked to focus efforts on YOTs in areas of high deprivation and/ or with high numbers of first time entrants.
- Continue to develop and share case studies of promising local practice, and the use of the "Ten Key Statements of Effective SEND Practice" as an audit tool, ideally linked to the existing Peer-Led Improvement Process.
- Undertake research in five YOT areas, tailored to local priorities and focussing on the information that is held by partner agencies at the point of a



young person's entry into the youth justice system and how this might be used more effectively to support early prevention.

The project team would like to hear from YOTs who wish to work with us in a more in-depth way over the next twelve months. Effectively we are offering some consultancy support funded by DfE, and the opportunity to receive accreditation for achieving high standards of partnership work with a Quality Mark and Quality Lead available.



To get started, we would need you to work with local authority SEND colleagues to complete a short self-audit (LimeSurvey) as an initial assessment of your service's development needs. We would then be able to offer support and training, as needed, which is adaptable to your local circumstances.



The project team will be contacting all YOTs by email and anticipates being able to send out the survey during May.

There will be an opportunity for members to hear more from Achievement for All at the forthcoming AGM in June at which Marius Frank, AFA Director, will be a guest speaker.

In the meantime, the latest updates on the project including the publication of the report of Year 1 (which is awaiting sign off by DfE) can be found by subscribing to the newsletter via <http://afaeducation.us6.list-manage2.com/subscribe?u=86ed797fe5240bb8ea0fa4fa3&id=b7fc57442f>



For further information please contact:

Phil Sutton, AYM Project Officer (SEND)
phil.sutton@aym.org.uk

Marius Frank, Director AfA
Marius.frank@afaeducation.org



“YOT to Yacht” Programme



A pioneering, therapeutic-based intervention programme has been specifically developed for youth offending teams by youth charity UKSA. The programme, “YOT to Yacht”, has been piloted over two years in partnership with Southwark Council and will now be offered as a bespoke programme for other teams

The programme utilises a variety of restorative methods and tasks that provide the young people more opportunities to engage with their case workers. It promotes development in self-esteem and self-confidence; an awareness of self and others, develops life skills and provides a vital opportunity for them to escape from the challenges they face in day-to-day life.



YOT to Yacht is delivered at UKSA’s waterfront base in Cowes on the Isle of Wight and uses on-the-water activities as the catalyst for positive change. The young people engage in water confidence sessions, raft-building, stand up paddle-boarding and sessions on a 40ft yacht. Plus, they are all provided with the opportunity to achieve a maritime qualification at UKSA.

Since the first pilot of the course in 2015, the challenges faced by Youth Offending Teams has led UKSA to develop a programme that is bespoke to each group. UKSA’s Mandy Ashton explains: “The piloting of the programme with Southwark Council has been a fundamental part of the development process. The key learnings we have taken from the groups has been that the young people have to be ready to take on the challenges and implement achievable exit strategies.”

YOT to Yacht uses therapeutic techniques, timetabling and nutritional input, alongside a menu of activities that allows the individuals to profit most from the programme. Subjects that restrict successful completion of court orders, such as CSE, drugs and the missing culture are also given discussion time with representatives from the YOT team on-site. ‘Talent spotting’ young people who are ready for the course or collecting young people directly from their own areas, rather than expecting them to travel across boundaries that may be unsafe for them to cross, results in high retention and attendance.



Alex Welch, Advanced Practitioner, Southwark Youth Offending Service says: “YOT to Yacht exposes the young people to experiences outside of their everyday environment and provides a practical and exciting way for them to realise that they

have potential. One young man who was frequently missing from care and had severe self-esteem issues learnt to swim, jumped in the sea for the first time and gained a maritime qualification, all in a week. YOT to Yacht offers them a positive experience; a taster of an alternative life and proof that they can achieve things they never would have imagined.”



UKSA is a youth charity and a maritime career training centre of excellence, so the young people are exposed to a positive and aspirational environment and can see the potential career pathways on offer. UKSA have been running programmes for 30 years and have helped thousands of young people improve their self-esteem, develop essential life skills and ultimately re-engage with employment, education and training.

UKSA CEO Ben Willows adds: “All young people completed the course and were evaluated using the Skills for Life framework assessment, with all skills areas indicating positive change. Decision-making, communication, self-belief and determination were the areas recording the most positive results with uplifts of between 47-87%.”

The programme’s evolution over the last two years has led to a re-evaluation of the associated costings per group. As a third-sector provider UKSA is well aware of the squeeze on public-sector budgets and they endeavour to offer the best-value package to each group.



UKSA would welcome enquiries from other youth offending teams regarding developing this innovative programme for their needs. Please contact Jodie Jones at UKSA for more information by emailing jodie.jones@uksa.org or by visiting www.uksa.org/youth-development

Want to stay up to date with YJ issues?



Then follow us on Twitter. We have more than 1,800 followers who receive frequent updates on issues relating to Youth Justice and YOT Managers. It’s easy to sign up. Our username is [@AssnYOTmanagers](https://twitter.com/AssnYOTmanagers)

The most important issues are also flagged up on the front page of our website. See ‘latest news’ section at <http://aym.org.uk>



“No, I’m his Twin Brother: memories of the way it was in Court in West Berkshire, but sadly is no more” by Peter George

A book review by the Editor



This interesting booklet recently landed on the desk of our Secretary recently, as he was previously a Probation Officer in Newbury Court back in the day. It is well worth a read.

Peter George (at left) was a magistrate in West Berkshire from 1977-2012, and penned this brief account of his memories after he retired from the bench. It is both a celebration of justice in England and a warning about how the courts are evolving towards automated sentencing.

Peter took his oath of office in 1977 seriously, especially “...to do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this realm, without fear or favour, affection or ill will”. He read this as being about administering Justice fairly, and specifically within his local community. He stresses the fact that he was a local person sitting in judgement on local people, where he knew the area, was accountable to the community, and everyone knew where he lived and worked.

He repeatedly makes the point that successive governments have reduced the independence of the magistracy. He says “...our delicate and unwritten constitution was always built on the separation of Legislature, Executive and Judiciary, and the danger of the Executive controlling the other two is, it seems to me, very great at present”. He continues that the courts today are staffed “...by Civil Servants employed by and answerable to whoever controls the government for the moment”, where previously they were accountable locally. So, his views on the Sentencing Council reflect this too, whose guidelines he describes as “...the Word of God”. He questions what satisfaction there is for magistrates who “...look up the right answer in a sentencing book” rather than dealing fairly with the person in front of them.

As the bench was amalgamated into an increasingly wide geographical area he felt this focus was being lost. So, over the years West Berkshire bench became part of the vast Thames Valley area, meaning that magistrates could sit across the whole area in an increasingly anonymous way. Finally, the



Newbury Court closed in 2016, along with many other closures nationally. He viewed his excellent relationship with the West Berks Clerk as vital to delivering on the oath of office, and again, this was watered down over time by the increasing size of the

bench. Mind you, his experience of a good Clerk doesn't equate with everyone's experiences around the country in the 80s and 90s.

The booklet has plenty of anecdotes about Peter's years on the bench, with lots of colourful characters, many of whom AYM members will recognise from their own court experiences. Peter's recollections support his views about local justice, which is close to the RJ principles which we espouse in Youth Justice. In court, he also dealt with external people coming into the area and breaking the law, such as the Greenham Common women of the 1980s and the A34 bypass protestors.



Despite these reservations, as the years passed his interest seems to have focused more and more on the Youth Court. He cites the establishment of YOTs as "...an unqualified success in West Berkshire ...and was very effective in halting many a potentially criminal life at an early stage". At the back of the booklet is a letter from Dave Wraight of West Berkshire YOT on Peter's retirement, thanking him for his commitment, and for remaining focused on preventing offending by young people through some "...bold and innovative sentencing approaches" with them. The booklet ends with a positive focus on youth offending as an epitaph.

The booklet is an easy and enjoyable read, being A5 size and less than 50 pages. It costs just £5 including postage, and is self-published by Peter, and so only available direct from him at petergeorge@ntlworld.com

Our Next Newsletter

The next AYM Newsletter will be published in August 2017. If you have any best practice you would like to share, any items for inclusion, or any feedback please contact jon.obyrne@aym.org.uk

Please share this newsletter with colleagues and any other organisations in youth justice, and encourage managers in youth justice to support the work of AYM to reduce offending.



Do you know who your AYM regional representative is?

The following is the up to date list of regional reps across the country, with email addresses. Feel free to contact them or other members of the Executive if there are issues you want to raise.

For details of all Executive Board members please see <http://aym.org.uk/about-us/board-members/>



East	Liz Clarke Bedfordshire YOS	liz.clarke@bedford.gov.uk
East Midlands	Shelley Nicholls Nottingham City YOS	shelley.nicholls@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
London	Brendan Finegan Hackney YOT	brendan.finegan@hackney.gov.uk
North East	Davie Parks Newcastle YOT	david.parks@newcastle.gov.uk
North West	Hannah Doughty Liverpool YOS	hannah.doughty@liverpool.gov.uk
South East	Jessica Edwards Brighton & Hove YOS	jessica.edwards@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk
South West	Mike Rees North Somerset YOT	mike.rees@n-somerset.gov.uk
West Midlands	Hazel Williamson Stoke-on-Trent YOS	hazel.williamson@stoke.gov.uk
Yorkshire and Humberside	Vacancy – Andy Peaden (Vice-Chair) covering	andy.peaden@leeds.gov.uk

PLEASE NOTE

This AYM Newsletter shares items which we feel may be of interest to members, but this should not be taken as endorsement of individuals, organisations or their products.

The views expressed in this Bulletin do not necessarily represent those of AYM or its membership.