

Warwickshire Youth Offending Team

YOT

Newsletter

June 2005
Volume 1
Issue 4

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GREETINGS

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2005, which comes at a time when we are reflecting on our achievements during 2004. Everyone working within the Youth Offending Service is congratulated for further improvements to our work with young people, parents, carers, and victims.

The years of working towards the development of the Justice Centre in Nuneaton came to fruition last year, and all agencies involved are now able to offer improved services to the community.

Change seems to be with us as a feature of life, not only in the criminal justice world, but also significantly within the children's services arena. Responses to the Criminal Justice Act and the Children's Act will be key activities for us in 2005.

Having been established for several years now, we are beginning to see some very valued and experienced staff move on to new jobs, new countries and new lifestyles where work doesn't feature.... each will be missed, but we welcome new staff and hope they will enjoy working with us.

Your continued commitment and enthusiasm is highly valued and will take us a long way in meeting the challenges ahead.

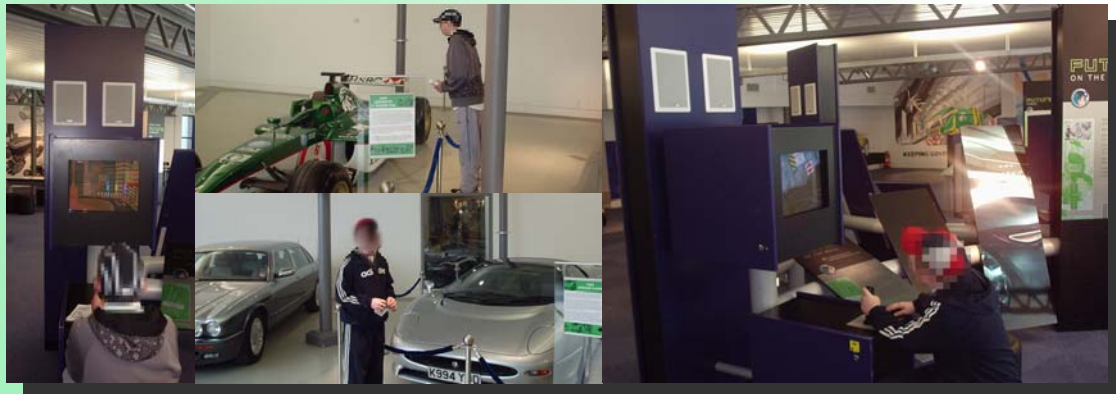
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ASDAN MUSEUM VISIT

As part of the **ASDAN Bronze Challenge** two Young People from Nuneaton and Bedworth went to the Museum of British Transport in Coventry.

We are proud to report that our Young People have achieved **13 Bronze ASDAN** awards and **2 Silver ASDAN** awards. These awards represent a significant achievement for the Young People who put in hours of work for this.

SG





YOT IN THE COUNTRY'S FIRST JUSTICE CENTRE

The Warwickshire Justice Centre located in Nuneaton is the first of its kind in the country, housing the Courts, Police, Probation Service, Youth Offending Team and voluntary services looking after the needs of victims and witnesses.

Locating the Probation Service, Courts and Police Station within the same building enables YOT to respond more effectively to the needs of Young People in custody or Court, or when they reach the age of 18 years.

The Youth Offending Team moved into this Centre on

17th January 2005 and quickly felt the benefits of being based in a multi-agency setting, with easier access to up-to-date information and the reduced delay in attending Court or police interviews.

The building has full IT support and YOT practitioners will soon be able to access online information whilst in Court. Practitioners are already realising the benefits of video conferencing facilities within the Centre, easing their working practise with those Young People placed in custody.

Her Royal Highness Princess Anne who met with practitioners from all the agencies during a tour of the Centre officially opened the Centre on Thursday 10th March. The unique nature of the Centre has meant that since the Centre has been opened a wide variety of visits have been undertaken, ranging from local residents to government officials.

Planning is currently underway to build a similar site in the south of the county.

LC

CHRISTMAS & EASTER WORKSHOPS

Seven Young People took part in the Christmas and Easter workshops, which were run especially for Young People on **Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme**. In addition to the Offending Behaviour focused work Young People were encouraged to try new sports. This included Basketball, Football and Golf. This was all part of helping Young People to engage in legitimate leisure activities and develop an interest in healthy living.

We also ran life skills workshops, which included teamwork, budgeting, cooking and washing up. The workshops took place at the **Merttens Centre** and the **Bradby Club**. We are very grateful to **PRU** staff and **Bradby Club** managers for working in partnership in this initiative.

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Margaret Mead

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NEWSFLASH FROM ISSP

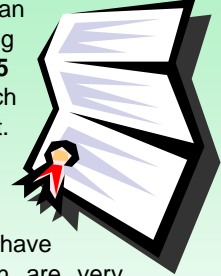
We are pleased with the success of the **Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes** that have been available since October 2003. These Orders are only for Young People who face possible custody – an **ISSP** is really the last chance they may have to prove that with help they can get their lives in order.

Between April 04 and March 05 we had 18 **ISSPs**, 5 of which were for Young People on bail. One of the bail **ISSPs** lasted 7 months during which time the young person really improved to the extent that when he was finally sentenced he did not receive the custodial sentence expected. Some months on he has not re-offended and we feel this was an excellent example of a successful Order. We expect a **50-60%** success rate with the Young People on **ISSP** and successes really help us to promote this as a credible alternative to custody. It is hard work but cost effective and of benefit for Young People and the community.

HW

A MOUNTAIN OF AQAs!

An **AQA** is a basic qualification achieved through completing a module of work, which is then assessed by an external verifier. **200** Young People have achieved **555 AQAs** between them, which is no mean achievement. The modules they complete cover all sorts of subjects from food hygiene to substance misuse. We have awards ceremonies, which are very well attended. One parent said, *"it is great to hear some good news about my son – I knew he could do this kind of work but he has never received an award before and it has really helped him"* (The young person concerned has since gone on to be a supporter of other Young People on the Bradby Education Project).



HW

DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PRACTITIONER

Olivia who has been working with YOT for one year now says, *"I've enjoyed working as a Practitioner in YOT. Working directly with the Young People is challenging, but rewarding. The work is extremely varied, in one day I may be in court as a court duty officer, acting as Appropriate Adult for a young person being interviewed by the police, attending a referral panel or carrying out offending behaviour work. I write reports for court and of course there's always lots of recording to do on the computer..."*

HW

ON YER BIKE!

Meet Anthony who is currently on a New Deal Placement with our team. He has volunteered to be the first member of the team to use a bike to get to work as part of the "Bike To Education, Training or Work" scheme. Young People on Court Orders help to recondition bikes and once certified as road worthy these are given to Connexions Wheels to Work Scheme. We would be pleased to accept donations of bikes that need some attention, as this is an ongoing scheme. Anthony says, *"having a bike gets me to work quicker than the bus, it is cheaper, keeps me fit and is good for the environment – I can highly recommend it"*



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Margaret Mead

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GREAT SUCCESS STORY

Rob, 17 was given a Referral Order by Nuneaton Youth Court following an assault on an 18 year old in August 2004. At the time of starting the Order Rob was unemployed, very low and not terribly motivated. Rob has always been a very likeable and polite young man, who at the time, was down on his luck. Rob's parents had asked him to sell his motorbike to pay off his fines imposed by the Courts and Rob had done so.



Since working with Rob, he has gained in confidence, has completed his contract in its totality by the 6-month review and worked on several community projects as part of his community payback. Rob considered the reparation sessions as successful and very rewarding. He explains that he enjoyed being able to do something worthwhile as repayment for the community. Rob initially met with the Connexions advisor with his YOT worker and applied for bridging allowance. Rob didn't want to apply for training he just wanted a job. However after much discussion Rob applied to the 3A's training centre and has now completed his 4-month in training working towards his NVQ in brickwork. Rob hopes to go on to complete his gardening qualification as he hopes to become a self-employed landscape gardener in the future. 3A's training also hope to put Rob forward for his maths and English GCSE's in May 2005.

Approximately 6 weeks ago, Rob had saved enough money to buy himself a bike again and is now the proud owner of a 50cc motorbike. Rob has refrained from offending and no longer associates with his old peers. Rob enjoys his life and thoroughly enjoys his training course.

VB

CANAL PROJECT PHOTOS

Photos taken by young people of the canal projects.



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Margaret Mead

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FROM A PANEL MEMBER DELEGATE

I have just completed a further year as a Panel Member Delegate; it has been an interesting and rewarding twelve months. I have had the pleasure of working with many Panel Members, YOT Practitioners and Managers. I have been really impressed by the dedication of everyone working to ensure that together we give the best possible service to young people.

Referral Orders have now been running for three years in Warwickshire and I believe we can be very

proud of what we, as voluntary community panel members have helped to achieve. All the statistics show that Referral Orders are effective and numbers of Young People re-offending on these Orders is lower than on any other Order.

We have all seen some remarkable successes. Many of us will have sat on initial panels and felt that the chance of the young person completing the Order to be very slight. How rewarding it has been therefore when six or nine months further on at a completion the young

person has returned to panel, the Order completed and their life turned around. I believe we should celebrate success, and it would be good if we all feed news of successes with Young People to the editor of this newsletter for future publication.

We are all aware of some of the difficulties the YOT team has been under over the last six months. I believe many of these problems are behind us now and I look forward to the next twelve months with real optimism.

JC

10 FACTS ABOUT REFERRAL ORDERS

1. Since Referral Orders have been available in Warwickshire, 500 Young People have received this Order when they were in Court for the first time.

2. Young People who are subject to Referral Orders may be asked to cooperate with all kinds of work:

- They may be asked to do free work, which benefits the victim or the community
- Meet regularly with a YOT Practitioner to address their offending behaviour
- Meet with a psychologist
- Address issues around; school attendance; obtaining training or employment; life skills; accommodation

3. Young People on Referral Orders have carried out the following types of Reparation:

- Working on an organic allotment producing organic produce for a day centre for older people
- Painting and decorating
- Mural painting (canal bridges in Rugby)
- Graffiti removal
- Repairing bicycles
- Small woodwork projects (bird boxes, etc)
- Community clear ups
- Reminiscence work with older people
- Kitchen work
- Gardening

4. Every Referral Order leads to at least 2 panels, but more usually 3. The first panel agrees a contract of work with Young People who have committed an offence, taking into consideration information about the offences committed and the views of the victim. The panel meets again at least once to review

progress, and then at the end of the Order the work carried out is reviewed.

5. We currently have 34 brilliant panel members: 29 female, 5 male.

6. Our panel members are between the ages of 18 and 70 years old, interested in making a difference in their communities and enjoy working with Young People and their families. The role is unpaid, but travelling expenses are met.

7. Parents value the work done by panel members. One parent commented, "It has almost been a relief to me that my son received a Referral Order, he now gets the help he needed and he is really trying to sort himself out".

8. Victims value the work done by YOT and Referral panel members. We have had a significant increase in the number of victims indicating the type of reparation work a young person should do to make amends for their offence. Better still, some of the victims are attending panels to make their views known to let the young person know what they feel and many more victims are receiving apologies

9. If a young person cooperates fully with a Referral Order, he or she may avoid having a Criminal Record.

10. We still need more panel members. Do you fit the picture? Would you like more information? Contact **Sandra Copson** on **01926736180**. We are especially keen to involve more young people, representatives of minority groups and more males.

HW

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Warwickshire Youth Offending Team

AND FINALLY MORE GOOD NEWS

Diane Johnson has recently been informed that the result of the Youth Justice Board Assurance Review is that Warwickshire Youth Offending Team's **Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP)** has been assessed as a **COMMENDED SCHEME**. This is the highest category available.

The main strengths were highlighted as:

- Highly committed, enthusiastic and driven **ISSP** management team
- A creative approach to providing needs-led individualistic programme
- An excellent model of an integrated **ISSP/YOT** service

Warwickshire **ISSP** is an integrated scheme very much viewed as part of the core business of YOT with the **ISSP** management team being "an integrated specialism" within the YOT. The assurance review found that the whole team are aware of the aims and objectives of **ISSP** both strategically and operationally. There was good evidence of partner agency "buy-in" and collaborative working, with many goals and responsibilities shared across the spectrum of agencies working with YOT.

The Review team were particularly impressed with the range and creativity of programmes, which demonstrated individualised needs led intervention plans, coupled with a genuine drive and commitment by both **ISSP** and YOT management teams.

YOT staff still feel that there is still room for improvement and are seeking to build on the recommendations of the report. However, we are all delighted with the multi agency success in delivering this new challenging provision. We have shown that there is a robust alternative to sending Young People to custody whilst at the same time ensuring the high level of supervision needed to prevent re-offending and protect the public.

MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE INVOLVED IN HELPING WARWICKSHIRE YOT TO ACHIEVE THIS SPECIAL STATUS.


HW

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