

Youth Justice

Annual Summary Report to March 2006

Introduction to Youth Justice in Angus



The vast majority of young people in Angus play an active and positive role in our community and are a great source of optimism for our future. Youth Justice Services meet the needs and deeds of children and young people who offend or who are at risk of offending. The aim is to improve the speed and quality of service provision to reduce offending and re-offending and improve outcomes for vulnerable children through the Hearings system. In addition to providing input that will allow children to meet their full potential, a complete range of services is available to address the behaviour and developmental needs of the minority of our young people who are involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, offending behaviour.



Youth Justice services need to be effectively targeted and tailored to ensure that the young people who need them can address their behaviour and work towards reaching their full potential. The measures range from preventative and diversionary initiatives aimed at those on the periphery of offending through to intensive community based services and secure accommodation for our most troubled (and troublesome) young people.

Chairperson of the local Angus Youth Justice Forum, Dr Robert Peat said,

'The increase in detection of youth crime demonstrates the Angus Youth Justice Forum's commitment to hold accountable young people who offend and commit anti-social behaviour. While there has been an increase in the number of persistent offenders in Angus we consider this reflects the increase in the number of young people detected having committed an offence. The next year will see a further increase in the resources made available to challenge youth offending in Angus. There will be a particular focus on supporting parents as well as offering most intensive services to troubled and troublesome young people. For those young people who persist in their offending despite the support on offer, the Angus Children's Panel has worked in collaboration with the Youth Justice Forum to plan for the best interests of these children including compulsory measures of supervision. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all members of the Angus Youth Justice Forum, our partners and others as we look forward to the future.'

The Angus Youth Justice Strategy

The Angus Youth Justice Strategy involves a number of key partners planning both joint and joined-up services to challenge and engage youth offending and anti-social behaviour in Angus.

The strategy is made up of four components within which specific services operate. These components relate to the risk of the young person re offending. The higher the risk the more intensive the supports provided to the young person. As needs and risks reduce so is the level of involvement from the agencies. It is an integrated approach with each component connected to the other, which allows for a young person's smooth transition up and down the continuum as his or her needs change.

Level of Risk	Primary Service Provider
Minimum Risk	Local Multi Agency Resource Teams (LMART's)
Low Risk	Angus Restorative Justice Service
Medium Risk	Community Resource Team
High Risk	Youth Justice Team

The Angus Youth Justice Communications Strategy provides specific information about how partners will inform the public with respect to both youth crime and the fear of youth crime and anti-social behaviour within Angus.

The Angus Youth Justice Forum is a multi agency strategic group which convenes every three months to plan and respond to developments affecting Youth Justice. The Forum is chaired by Dr Robert Peat, Director of Social Work and Health and membership is drawn from key representatives from the following agencies.

Social Work Community Resource Team	Social Work Youth Justice Team	Social Work Criminal Justice Service	Tayside Police Community Safety
Tayside NHS	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	Children's Panel	Victim Support Service
Education Department	Tayside Council on Alcohol	Neighbourhood Services Housing	Neighbourhood Services Sports and Countryside
Tayside Fire and Rescue Service	The Web Project	Barnado's	Angus Drug and Alcohol Team



Local Multi-Agency Resource Teams - LMART

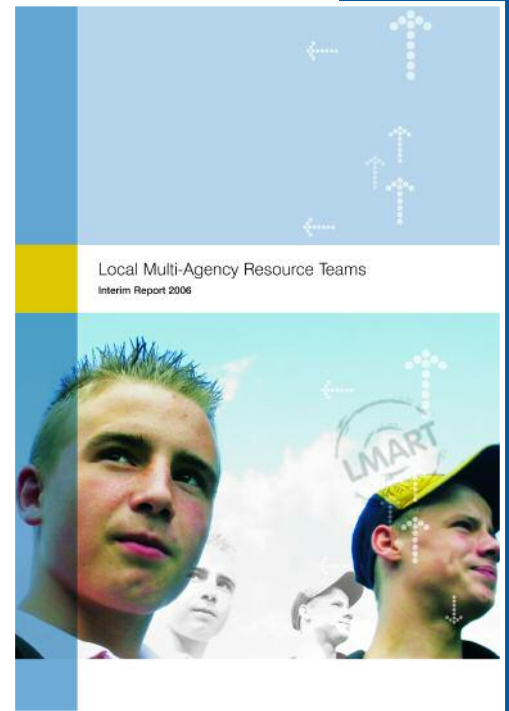
The Local Multi Agency Resource Teams are considered to be a valuable early intervention asset to the Angus Youth Strategy. In addition to providing a forum where concerns pertaining to young people can be discussed, it is also a means of directly accessing and providing services on a multi agency basis. 36% of all young people referred to LMART were previously known to the police for offending behaviour.

Six months from point of closure 35% of those previously involved in offending had not been reported for further incidents of offending. Twelve months from point of closure 32% of those previously involved in offending had not been reported for further incidents of offending (see chart below).

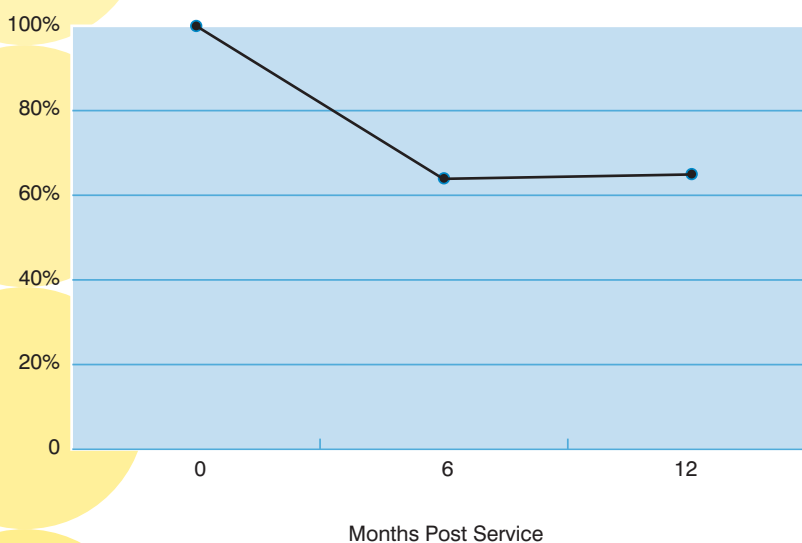
The LMART forums have proven to be an effective tool in tackling anti social behaviour. A number of community concerns have been referred resulting in a multi-agency response to highly visible and problematic issues. The outcomes in these areas have not only benefited the young people but other members of the public and the community as a whole. This has been particularly noticeable in the more rural areas where access to certain services can be limited.

The close links established between the various agencies involved with the Youth Justice Strategy allows the LMART's to act as a conduit between the early intervention providers such as Restorative Justice and the more specialist services such as the Community Resource and Youth Justice Teams.

This goes some way to ensuring that young people who are committing offences in Angus receive an appropriate and proportionate service at a time when it will be most effective.



Reduction in Offending Behaviour



The full LMART Interim Report 2006 and DVD can be accessed via www.angus.gov.uk/services

Community Resource Team (CRT)

The CRT performs two primary roles within the Youth Justice Strategy providing a service at both ends of the tariff.

The majority of Initial Assessment Reports (IAR's) into the circumstances of young people who are alleged to have committed an offence are undertaken by the Community Resource Team. Of the 130 IAR's completed last year only 7 (around 5%) resulted in a Children's Hearing being convened *and 75% have been recorded as going on to not commit further offences within the year.* 95% were either considered not to require intervention, were diverted to the most appropriate service provider or received a service direct from the team on a voluntary basis. The close links established between the various agencies involved with the Youth Justice Strategy allows the CRT to act as conduit between the early intervention providers such as Restorative Justice and LMART and the more specialist services such as the Youth Justice Team. This goes some way to ensuring that young people who are committing offences in Angus receive an appropriate and proportionate service at a time when it will be most effective.

The team also work directly with young people and their families where offending behaviour or other presenting concerns are placing them at risk of being removed from their community. This takes the form of 1-2-1 intervention and group work. Over the past year there has been a rolling programme of group work that has involved over 40 young people. The Community Resource Team run a Offending Group work program during the school holidays at Easter and during the Summer. This is specifically designed to address issues pertaining to youth offending and is an integral part of reducing offending behaviour and maintaining young people in the community. The majority of participants were not subject to statutory measures and, to date, have been kept out of the Children's Hearing system

During the summer the CRT is also involved in the provision of a diversionary activity programme in conjunction with other partnership agencies.

Children's Reporter

Over the last year the Children's Reporters in Angus received over 800 referrals from the police in connection with over 1300 alleged offences. In each of these cases, the Reporter assessed the police report submitted and considered whether there was sufficient corroborated evidence to support the charge 'beyond reasonable doubt' which is the criminal test applied to such allegations. Thereafter the Reporter can decide:

- To take no formal action (perhaps the child is already engaged with workers who can address the issues, or the family have already dealt with matters effectively or diversion to agencies like the Angus Restorative Justice Service will be the best option); or

- To ask for further reports - from the child's school, for instance, or the Social Work Department - in order to assess the situation more fully;
- Once those reports are received, to refer the child to the Local Authority for assistance to be given on a voluntary basis for as long as is necessary or to take no other formal action; or
- To refer the child to a Children's Hearings where decisions will be made by members of the Children's Panel about the need or not for compulsory measures of supervision for the child.

In some cases, where the alleged offence is not accepted by the child and/or parents, the reporter may be instructed by the Hearing to apply for proof of the disputed charges in the Sheriff Court, which will lead to a process very like a criminal trial, but held in private rather than open to the public, where witnesses will be questioned and the sheriff will decide whether or not the charge is established. If it is established, a further Children's Hearing will then consider the child's case again, taking the charge into account.

One of the areas which SCRA (Scottish Children's Reporter Administration) is currently developing in Angus is the Victim Information Service, which gives victims of youth crime opportunities to find out what decisions reporters and hearings are making in relation to the incident. This service started in February 2006 and goes some way to giving the victims of youth crime the same kind of information that victims of adult crime can obtain.

Over the past year, over 70% of the decisions on referrals were made within 50 working days of the receipt of the referral and the child and family were informed of the decision within 5 working days in over 80% of the cases. In some cases, there are very complex issues, and although making decisions as quickly as possible is important, we must balance that against making the best possible decision for the young person involved - and that can take longer.

Children's Reporters liaise with partner agencies at all levels - from considering what's best for an individual child to participation in strategic planning and development of protocols and resources. It is only by working together that we can help children and young people reduce and stop their offending and create the safest possible environment for them, their families and the wider community.

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Youth Justice Team

The Youth Justice Team is a specialist resource within Children's Services. Based in Arbroath, the team was created as one of the components of Angus Council's strategic response to the problems of youth crime. A young person meets the criteria for a service if they are considered a persistent offender as defined in the National Standards for Youth Justice. The team uses the ASSET risk assessment tool. The intervention provided by the Youth Justice Team is informed by the "what works" research and meta-analysis which shapes much of the current thinking and effective practice in reducing levels of offending. This research promotes the use of methods of



intervention which are skill-based and which employ cognitive-behavioural techniques and which meet principles of "programme integrity" .

Work undertaken by the Youth Justice Team with young people referred to them adheres to the underlying principles of "what works":

- **Assessment identifies risk classification**
- **criminogenic needs are addressed**
- **programme integrity is maintained**
- **the responsibility or the "learning style" of the young person informs work**
- **sufficient service is provided to effect change**
- **programmes of work mainly draw on cognitive-behavioural theories and young people are support is given in developing skills.**

Each young person referred for a programme of work is initially assessed using the ASSET risk assessment tool; this marks a change from the previous arrangements when the YLS/CMI tool was used. A programme plan is then drawn up which addresses all of the risk factors identified in the assessment. Each young person's plan is designed to meet their individual needs and sets targets and objectives which are reviewed at least three monthly. The team also run short-term groups to address offending behaviour and there are plans to run:

- **a road traffic offence group**
- **an alcohol awareness group**
- **a victim awareness group**
- **an activity group (during school holidays)**

The groups will be run with other services including TCA (Tayside Council on Alcohol), Tayside Fire Brigade and the Community Resource Team.

In order to comply with “what works” principles; the level of intensity of service needs to be matched to the level of need identified in the risk assessment. Young people are therefore generally seen for approximately three hours per week, usually over two sessions. Most young people are involved with the team for at least six months and many require longer periods of intervention to effect positive change. Regular contact is maintained with parents and carers (where appropriate) in order to promote their positive support for the programme of intervention.

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Barnados - Our Work With Narrative Therapy

At Bridge we have begun to make use of some techniques from Narrative Therapy and are finding it a rewarding and positive experience for young people, their families and workers. The initial signs have demonstrated encouraging outcomes.

Narrative therapy cites people as experts in their own lives. It separates the person from the problem and assumes young people and families have the skills and strengths to reduce the influence of problems in their lives.

Young people referred to Bridge often have labels attached to them due to the serious nature of the behaviour and the risks posed to others.

A task for Bridge is to free the young person up to discuss the behaviour in such a way that they are able to understand the behaviour better, to take responsibility for their actions and to develop greater control over the behaviour.

By separating the behaviour from the young person using ‘externalisation’ young people have been able to talk about the influence of the problem in their lives and begin to recognise the times when they are able to take control and to escape the influence of the problem behaviour.

One young person, Dan, named his behaviour ‘the Touching Monster’. It was possible for him to talk about when the ‘Touching Monster’ first appeared in his life and how it had affected his friendships, his family and the activities a boy could expect to enjoy. He was able to think about when the ‘Touching Monster’ had most influence, and when he felt most able to keep the ‘Touching Monster’ at bay. Dan in time developed a superhero, Mighty, to help and support him reject the ‘Touching Monster.’

Being able to talk about the concerning sexual behaviour in this way allowed Dan and his family to share the problem and for Dan to be able to use the support of his family when the ‘Touching Monster’ is around. This encouraged Dan and his family to use the keeping safe strategies they had discussed.

Restorative Justice/Victims

The Angus Restorative Justice Service is a partnership between The WEB Project and Tayside Council on Alcohol, and has been actively supporting young offenders and the victims of youth crime since September 2002. The project currently takes referrals from the Children's Reporter, LMART and Angus Council Social Work Department, working with young people between the ages

of 11-17 with the aim of reducing re-offending and allowing young people the opportunity to make amends for their offending behaviour through the use of Mediation and Reparation. This method also allows victims of youth crime, to take part in the process, having a say as to how the

offence has impacted on them, and identify how the

young person may be able to make amends. In the period April 05 to March 06, there have been 37 referrals from the Children's Reporter, 18 referrals from Social Work, 8 referrals from LMART and 1 self referral. Work undertaken with these young people includes the completion of a tailor made Awareness Raising Programme with a duration of up to 12 weeks for LMART and Social Work Referrals. Referrals from the Children's Reporter are completed within a 28 day reporting period. Other forms of intervention include Face to Face meetings with the victims of youth crime, Group work, Writing a letter of apology to the victim, Community Tasks, Anger Management Programmes, and other programmes specific to the offence in question.

"This method also allows victims of youth crime, to take part in the process"



Children's Hearings in Angus

The past year has been a particularly busy time for the Hearing System in Angus. Over the period from April 2005 to March 2006 Angus Children's Panel undertook 193 hearing sessions with 27 serving panel members sitting on a total of 406 hearings. This included 2 hearings held outwith the area in relation to Angus children being accommodated in secure placement. We successfully recruited 11 new panel members who have now completed their pre-service training and are beginning to sit on hearings. We will be recruiting again this November when we hope to enlist the

services of around 6 to 8 new panel members. As you may expect training is an ongoing feature in a panel member's life. Over the past year all panel members received training on Anti Social Behaviour Orders and Parenting Orders. A majority of members also received training on National Standards for Youth Justice together with a few members participating in multi agency training organised by Angus Child Protection Committee. It was noted these multi agency sessions were very well received and described as

worthwhile, informative and interesting. An in-service training programme for year 2006/2007 is currently being devised. We take this opportunity to thank all professionals and agencies who work tirelessly to improve the lives of children and young people in Angus. Their informative reports and their presence at hearings is appreciated and highly valued by panel members. Finally it is fitting also to thank panel members for giving up their valuable time, particularly those who during the busy period undertook additional hearings.



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The Impact of Anti-social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour - such as graffiti, vandalism, harassment and violence - can make life a misery within Angus.

All agencies are determined that the small minority of people who engage in these types of activities should be held accountable for their actions so that the majority of law-abiding people can feel safe and secure in their own neighbourhoods.

Tayside Police and partners have been vigorous and robust in detecting anti-social behaviour such as Vandalism and street drinking.

LMART Development workers, Community Wardens, Community Learning and Development workers and the Community Safety Team adopt a preventative approach with young people to support their use of local amenities and facilities and by building up positive relations in local areas, to deal at an early stage with potentially problematic behaviour.

The Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004 introduced new powers to tackle antisocial behaviour, some of which are specifically targeted at children, young people and their parents. Specifically, there are new powers to apply for Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) for children aged 12-15 years. Within the national Guidance on ASBOs, there is an encouragement to agencies to seek voluntary solutions with such children and their families, through the use of Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABAs).

Audit of Youth Crime in Angus

Young people tend to be involved in less serious offences, which, if identified early can be dealt with by the Police by a restorative caution or warning.

Tayside Police and partners focus on particular areas where local communities are affected most with anti-social behaviour. Operation Dry-up for example, targets resources to tackle under-age drinking. Regular visits to drinking dens and haunts resulted in over 600 litres of alcohol being recovered from young people throughout Angus over the last year. Community warning letters are then sent out where appropriate, to the parents or carers of the young persons involved.

What Type Of Offences Are Committed By Young People In Angus?

2004/5

Young people were involved in 1006 episodes amounting to 1322 offences.

Assault	25%
Theft/Dishonesty	18%
Vandalism	21%
Breach of the peace	13%
Road Traffic Offences	9%
Drug Offences	2%
Racial conduct	2%
Fire-raising	1%
Other	9%

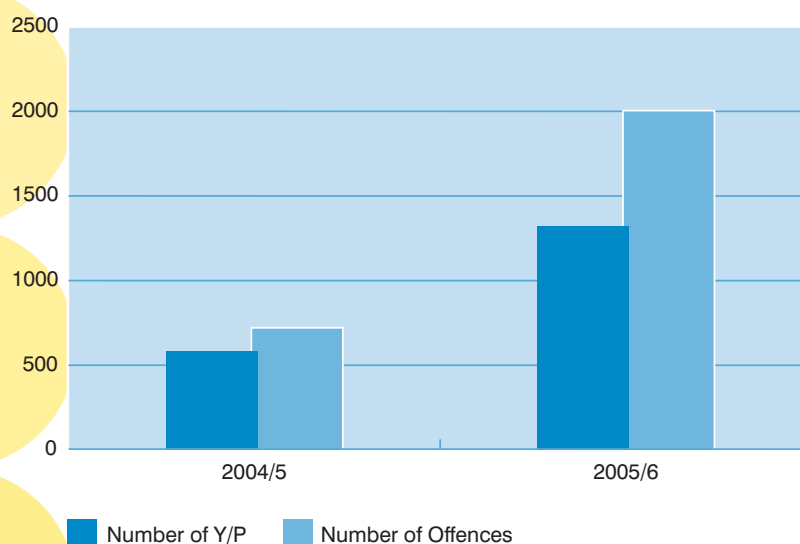
2005/6

Young people were involved in 1355 episodes amounting to 2004 offences

Assault.	23%
Theft/Dishonesty	20%
Vandalism	19%
Breach of the peace	14%
Road Traffic Offences	9%
Drug Offences	2%
Racial conduct	1%
Fire-raising	1%
Other	11%

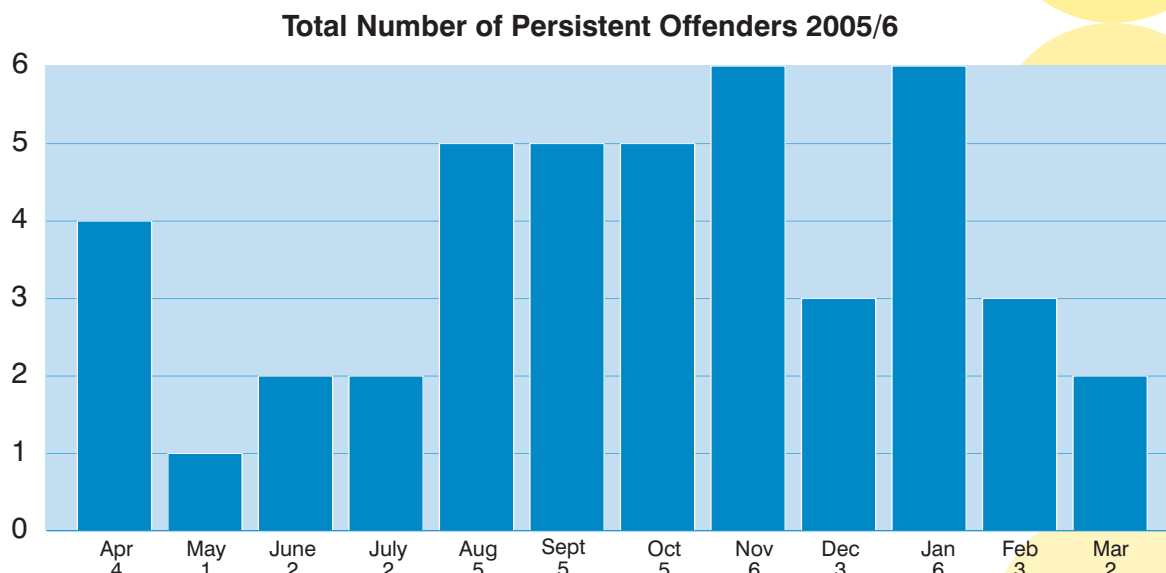
Although there was a slight reduction, Assaults continued to be the main category of offence committed by young people. Generally the victims of assaults were young people themselves. The chart below indicates the actual number of young people who offended in the years indicated.

Detected Level of Crime Within the 8-15 Year Age Group



Persistent Offenders

The Persistent Offender and Trends Monitoring Groups meet regularly to share information, discuss emerging issues and to focus and prioritise resources. While persistent offenders remain a priority group for Angus' agencies, new information-sharing arrangements have ensured that the same amount of focus can now be targeted on those who are active offenders but who have not yet reached the persistent offender threshold.



In 2005/6 there were 44 Young Persons who met the Persistent Offenders criteria. It is recognised that there are two routes for young people to be registered on this list:

1. As a 'New PO' i.e. someone who is qualifying for the very first time.
2. As a 'Re-Qualified PO' i.e. someone who was previously registered in a previous year and has re-qualified this year.

Both groups have to meet the Persistent Offender criteria of 5 'episodes' of offending in the previous 6 months.

Youth Justice Facts

- There are approximately 11,000 young people aged between 8 and 16 years in Angus
 - 75% of young people who commit an offence do not go on to re-offend
- Only 0.4% of young people are persistent offenders (5 offences within a 6 month period)
 - Reported incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour are on the decrease whilst detection rates are on the increase

For more information or copies of this report please contact:

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TAYSIDE POLICE

Wendy's Story

Wendy (14 years old) was referred to the Restorative Justice Service (RJS) from the Community Resource Team because she had committed assaults on one female on several occasions. Wendy at this time showed no remorse for the assaults and admitted to instigating the physical attacks. After the initial contact with Wendy and her Mum to explain the service RJS deliver, she agreed to meet up on a regular basis to explore alternative outcomes to her anger.

Initially the background to the assaults and the relationship between Wendy and the victim was established. She stated that a long term feud had been on going between the two families which involved the mothers working together and having major conflict in and out of work. Further sessions involved identifying the victim's feelings and the consequences to Wendy's actions. RJS discussed the impact this behaviour was having on Wendy and the escalation of the responsibility she felt for protecting her Mum. She stated her Mum was being victimised by the victim's Mum and Wendy believed this was her way of retribution by provoking the daughter of her Mum's tormentor.

At this stage RJS discussed with Wendy's Mum her relationship with the victim's Mum and she stated that this was an awkward relationship because of work and a history of conflict. However a resolution was established within the workplace and a more amicable relationship between the parents was agreed at this time. Work continued with Wendy and involved anger management and identifying situations that could be dealt with in a more acceptable manner.

Wendy is now aware of the consequences of physical actions and has identified the impact this has on the victim. She has also identified future goals and has identified barriers to her future aspirations. Wendy has not committed any further offences since work was completed.

Liam's Story

Liam (12 years old) was referred to the Restorative Justice Service by the Children's Reporter on account of two charges - Theft by Housebreaking and Theft by Opening a Lockfast Place. An awareness raising programme was undertaken with this young person that looked at his offending in detail, triggers, peer influences, decision making, consequences and ways of keeping himself out of trouble in the future. Work also focussed on how the victims were affected by his actions to reinforce the wider impact of his offending. Liam was co-operative and motivated throughout the programme which lasted approximately two months. At the end of the work Liam participated in face-to-face meetings with both of his victims and apologized for the harm he had caused. The library asked him to help sort books out for an evening as a way of making amends and he did this along side the Project Worker.

