

Hilary Benn praises the achievements of the West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development spoke at the West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams Fifth Anniversary Conference and congratulated West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams for the significant progress they have made in tackling youth crime. Mr Benn, who is also the Minister for the Prolific and Other Priority Offender Scheme in West Yorkshire, addressed the 350 representatives from the police, probation, local authorities, magistracy and education and gave his own very positive perspective on the achievements of the YOTs over the past five years and their significant contribution to the reduction of crime.

The Minister also met Leeford Walker, 19, from Little London, Leeds, a reformed offender who is now urging other young people at risk of offending to steer away from a life of crime. Leeford was placed on the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) two years ago after being found guilty of a number of drug dealing offences. The support he received through the scheme delivered by the Leeds Youth Offending Service has helped him to rethink his life and move on.

Mr Benn said, "There is much to be proud of in what West Yorkshire has achieved over the past few years in tackling youth offending and in reducing crime generally. There have been significant reductions in crime in West Yorkshire. Provisional figures for 2004/05 published by West Yorkshire Police show burglary is down 37%, vehicle crime down 31%, robbery down 41% and violent crime down 5.4%. Much of this is attributable to the work and leadership of the police and also the work of partners in Community Safety Partnerships across West Yorkshire and in the wider Criminal Justice System."

He continued to say, "Leeford Walker was a young offender who turned his life around thanks to the support he received from Leeds Youth Offending Service. The intensive help he obtained through ISSP encouraged him to become a peer role model and Millennium Volunteer working with young people at risk of offending. I look forward to hearing many more such successes in the coming months and years."

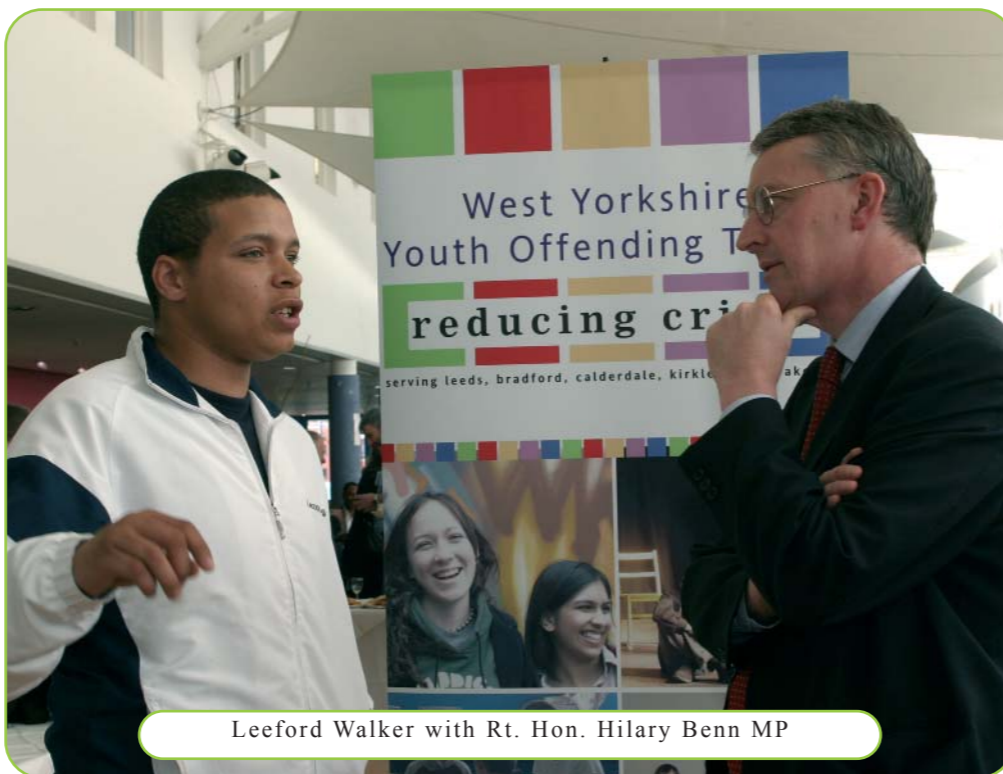


Leeford Walker said, "ISSP is one of the best programmes for young people who offend because it helps you make choices and opens doors to other opportunities. My advice to young people who offend is that there is more to life than their estate. It is also important that they think about what is best for their future."

During the conference the Youth Offending Teams also launched their contribution to the Prolific and Priority Offender Scheme.

Jim Hopkinson, Leeds Youth Offending Service Manager (left) said, "Leeds, like the other West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams, has demonstrated exceptional success in reducing overall youth crime in the region over the last five years. When they do offend, young people are dealt with quickly and are routinely expected to take responsibility for their actions and make amends to their victims."

"Our task now is to build on these solid foundations by offering a first class service to victims and by investing in services that prevent young people from getting involved in crime in the first place."



Leeford Walker with Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn MP

# Building on Success

Conference kindly sponsored by:



## Youth Offending Teams



serving leeds, bradford, calderdale, kirklees and wakefield

The West Yorkshire Youth Offending Team Conference - Friday, 20th May 2005

### Building on Success - 5th Anniversary for YOTs

The West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams celebrated their 5th Anniversary with a highly successful conference held at the West Yorkshire Play House in Leeds. It attracted delegates from across the region representing the spectrum of agencies and organisations working in the youth justice system, including 120 magistrates. It was sponsored by Securicor, with support from the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board and the West Yorkshire Magistrates Courts Service.

The conference was chaired by James Gill, Offender Management Service Director for Group 4 Securicor. The keynote speakers were Professor Rod Morgan, Chairman of the Youth Justice Board of England & Wales, Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, who is the Government's sponsor minister for Prolific and Priority Offenders Strategy in West Yorkshire and Colin Cramphorn, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire.



Left to right: Paul O'Hara (Bradford YOT Manager), Leeford Walker a reformed ex-Young Offender from Leeds, Stephen Crofts (Wakefield YOT Manager), Jim Hopkinson (Leeds YOS Manager), Professor Rod Morgan, Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn MP, Stephen Toye (Calderdale YOT Manager), Colin Cramphorn and James Gill.

### Message from the Chair

As a supplier to several of the West Yorkshire YOTs, Group 4 Securicor (G4S) was delighted to sponsor and support the 'Building on Success' Conference.

The Conference Chair, James Gill, Director - Offender Management Services (G4S) said, "There was an excellent programme on the day with a mix of high profile speakers from across the justice services addressing both the local and national perspectives of youth offending. Judging by the audience feedback and the level of questions asked it was clear that the organising team had pitched the programme just right. Unfortunately, we just ran out of time on the Question & Answer session!"

James went on to say, "I was particularly impressed at how well the conference was put together and organised, as from past experience I appreciate all the hard work a successful event requires. Without doubt from my perspective, as conference chairman, there was a genuine high level of interest from the large and diverse audience. It was a pleasure to work with such a professional team."

From top: A full Courtyard theatre; the Securicor exhibition stand; Jim Brady, Bradford ISSP Manager with Harry Hudson and Jabir Dhorat from Foundation Housing; Raj Madhas, Bradford Junior YIP, with delegates.



In 2004 the West Yorkshire Courts passed 5800 sentences on young offenders

### Professor Rod Morgan uses to YOT Conference to send out key message

Professor Rod Morgan used the Conference to send out a strong message about the way young people are portrayed in the media and how this affects their treatment in the criminal justice system. He said he had quite deliberately kept a fairly low profile during his first year as Chair of the Youth Justice Board but that the time might now have come for him to take a higher, bolder stance. It seems likely that youth crime and anti-social behaviour is to become a highly politicised media-dominated debate. The Prime Minister's focus on respect suggests as much. Professor Morgan also highlighted that heavy reporting of serious crime by young people is happening, and that voices are already being raised advocating tougher, more punitive policies than those we already have. It is his belief that, unless we question the wisdom of this approach, the plans and budgets of Youth Offending Teams are going to be knocked severely off course.

He was pleased to report that his core messages at the conference (too many children in custody, too many children being criminalised, better ways in which we could tackle youth crime and ASB, etc) went down exceedingly well. He believes that we have to beat the drum for a different way, which we have in many ways pioneered (early prevention programmes, Safer Schools, ISSP, etc). He asserted that he and the Board will, over the coming months, be looking for various ways (in public and behind the scenes) to ensure that the public debate about youth crime is balanced, rational, long term and serious.

His speech at the conference was echoed in an interview he gave to the Observer on the same day. As the government's chief adviser on youth crime he called on politicians and the media to stop calling children 'jobs' and warned that Britain risks demonising a generation of young people. In the interview he said this country was throwing out contradictory messages about its attitude to children. He added that while, on the one hand, children represented the country's aspirations for the future, on the other, they were being condemned as thugs in hooded tops.

"We use the word 'job' without distinguishing between very young children - who haven't chosen their parents, their neighbourhoods or their circumstances and can't walk away from them - and young adults," he said. "I don't think the word 'job' should ever be used in relation to young children." Professor Morgan urged politicians to stop announcing 'quick fix' policies rather than getting to grips with the crisis of youth custody, which has seen a 90 per cent increase in recent years.

Professor Morgan released a statement after the conference which summarised his views. He said, "In its short life of five years the reformed youth justice system has made great progress and we were able to celebrate that achievement at the brilliantly organised Leeds event, at which all our key partners were represented."



Young offenders are today more likely to be brought to account for their behaviour. There are fewer delays in dealing with them. Persistent offenders are more intensely supervised and custodial regimes are now better focused on rehabilitation.

But there remains much to do ...

We must further engage the community in solutions to youth crime and anti-social behaviour. Too many minor offenders are coming before the youth court who could be earlier and better dealt with elsewhere, and there are far too many children and young people in custody.

We discussed these issues frankly at Leeds and began to lay the foundations for further progress regarding them."

In 2004 the West Yorkshire YOTs worked with 1850 individuals on prevention programmes

## The West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams



The managers of the 5 West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams. Left to right, Jim Hopkinson (Leeds), Stephen Crofts (Wakefield), Stephen Toye (Calderdale), Paul O'Hara (Bradford) and Richard Smith (Kirklees).

The West Yorkshire YOTs are committed to developing and implementing an effective crime prevention strategy, in partnership with other agencies.

The YOTs, now five years old, are at the heart of youth crime prevention measures in England and Wales. Working in partnership with the police, youth courts, health and social services and other local agencies they ensure that the needs of young people are at the centre of all interventions.

They have an increasing role and influence on the prevention agenda, working with younger children through a range of community-based programmes.

The success of the YOTs has had a significant and positive impact on the reduction of youth crime - the challenge is to build on that success and improve the range and quality of provision across West Yorkshire.

For more details on the any of the services delivered for young offenders and their families in West Yorkshire, contact any of the YOTs on the numbers below:

Leeds	Bradford	Calderdale	Kirklees	Wakefield
<b>Leeds YOS</b>	<b>Bradford &amp; District YOT</b>	<b>Calderdale YOT</b>	<b>Kirklees YOT</b>	<b>Wakefield YOT</b>
Manager - Jim Hopkinson	Manager - Paul O'Hara	Manager - Stephen Toye	Manager - Richard Smith	Manager - Stephen Crofts
31 Moor Road Headingley Leeds LS6 4BG	41 Bank Street Bradford BD1 1RD	3 Trinity Place Halifax West Yorkshire HX1 2BD	2nd Floor Somerset Building 10 Church Street Huddersfield HD1 1LS	5 West Parade Wakefield West Yorkshire WF1 1LT
Telephone - 0113 214 4650	Telephone - 01274 436060	Telephone - 01422 368279	Telephone - 01484 226935	Telephone - 01924 304155
Fax - 0113 224 2706	Fax - 01274 436061	Fax - 01422 368483	Fax - 01484 226938	Fax - 01924 304156
E-mail - jim.hopkinson@leeds.gov.uk	E-mail - paul.ohara@bradford.gov.uk	E-mail - stephen.toye@calderdale.gov.uk	E-mail - richard.smith@kirklees.gov.uk	E-mail - SCrofts@wakefield.gov.uk
www.leeds-yot.org.uk	www.bradford-yot.co.uk	www.calderdaleyot.org.uk	www.kirklees-yot.org.uk	www.wakefieldyot.org.uk

**The Afternoon Workshops**

The conference featured a series of parallel workshops held in the afternoon session. The delegates were able to choose in advance the one which matched their own specialism or area of responsibility. They were:

- Prevention of Offending
- Rehabilitation and Resettlement
- Contribution of education, training and employment to the reduction of offending

They featured a series of presentations from local and national leaders in their respective fields. This format offered delegates the opportunity to examine key issues in more detail, and to question people setting the agendas.



**The five West Yorkshire YOTs have 410 staff and 530 volunteers working with young offenders and young people at risk of offending.**

**Colin Cramphorn  
Chief Constable of West Yorkshire**

The West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams were delighted that Colin Cramphorn was able to address the conference. He said, "The variety of policy makers, practitioners and volunteers that attended the conference made for particularly fruitful discussions in between the formal sessions."

The wide cross-section of exhibitors showed the breadth of work that is ongoing with young people across West Yorkshire and the resulting press coverage helped to balance the endless avalanche of negative publicity around community punishments, young people and those who work with them."

He concluded by saying, "All this made the conference an extremely worthwhile event and one of which the five West Yorkshire Youth Offending Teams can and should feel justifiably proud."

From top: Colin Cramphorn and Paul O'Hara; the Question & Answer session proved successful, with the keynote speakers being joined by Neil Franklin, Chief Crown Prosecutor for West Yorkshire CPS (second left); delegates are kept informed at the Pit Stop stand; Colonel Peter Martin, Regional Co-ordinator, England, for the Outreach Project (centre) with Ian Murray, Outreach Project Officer and Maxine Hinks, Resources and Partnerships Manager, from Wakefield YOT; the afternoon workshops looked in details at a range of local and national issues.

**A 5 Year Journey**

The morning section of the conference was opened by Edwina Harrison, Chief Officer, Children & Families, for Leeds City Council. She compared the first five years of the Youth Offending Teams as a journey taken at a dangerous pace but one which had achieved a great deal.

Edwina identified the key achievements which included the development of a performance culture using performance data, the use of evidence-based assessment, a broad multi-agency approach, the emphasis on prevention, developing parenting skills and the introduction of an effective HR and Learning Strategy.

However, the most important was the focus on the needs of the child. She identified the challenges which have been set by the Children Act 2004 - Childrens Services Authority, Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Childrens Trusts arrangements, Workforce Reform, Lead Professional and Common Assessment.

Edwina concluded by stating that Youth Offending Teams are in a unique position to influence the criminal justice and children's welfare agendas and looked forward to 2010 but with no letting up in the pace of the journey!



**The Youth Justice Board calculate that the average cost of sending a young offender to custody in West Yorkshire for a 12-month term is £81,000. In 2004, 522 young people received custodial sentences with an average duration of 5.9 months. This cost £21.1 million which is equivalent to running 140 Youth Inclusion Programmes!**

**The Prolific and Priority Offender Scheme**

The prolific and priority offender (PPO) scheme was announced on 30 March 2003. Each Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) has identified a small number of individuals who pose the greatest threat to the safety and confidence of their local communities. This will enable local partners to concentrate their joint efforts on those people identified locally as causing most harm to their communities. By allowing every area to prioritise those individuals, the Youth Offending Teams aim not only to cut crime and disorder, but also to enhance the confidence of local communities.

The prolific and priority offender scheme uses police intelligence to target the offenders who are responsible for the most crime, ensuring that all agencies concentrate their resources on these offenders. The strategy is designed to tackle both prolific offending and its roots by:

- **Preventing and deterring** - to stop people becoming prolific offenders
- **Catching and convicting** - tackling those who are already prolific offenders
- **Rehabilitating and resettling** - working to increase the number of offenders who stop offending by offering a range of supportive interventions.



The conference involved a lot of planning and hard work behind the scenes, typified by the efforts of Adrian Woods (right), Project Manager, and Dominic Eason, from Pit Stop 2000 in Halifax, seen here transporting a Go-Kart which was the eye-catching centre-piece of their display. Pit Stop is a partner with Calderdale YOT providing young people with positive activities and alternative education provision.

**The Magistrates' Perspective**

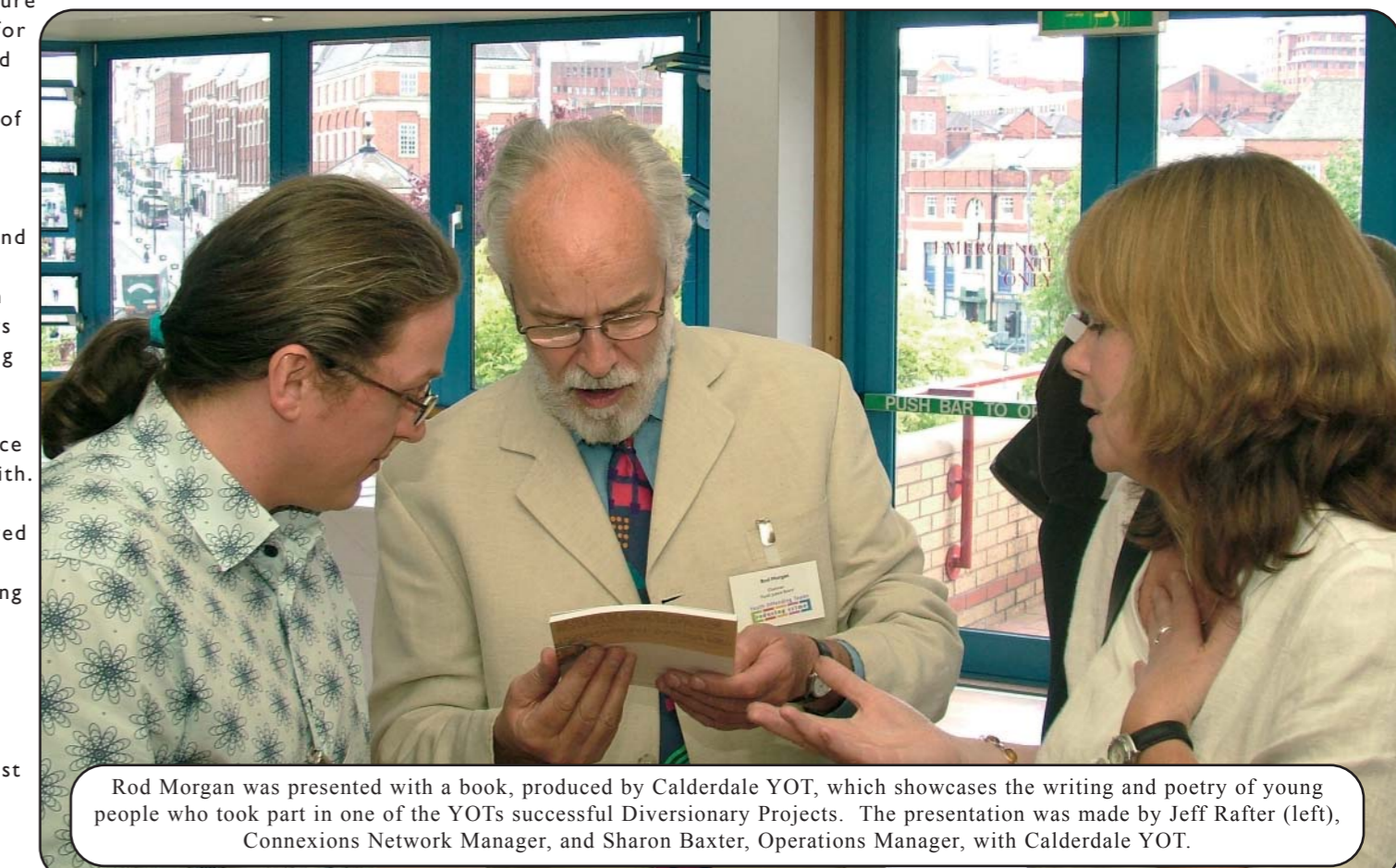
Janet Carter, Legal Training Manager for the West Yorkshire Magistrates Courts Service was delighted to integrate one of the Magistrates' training days with the YOT conference. For Janet it provided a welcome opportunity to bring the Magistrates and youth justice agencies together. She said, "Over the lunchtime period I was able to speak to a number of magistrates who were attending the conference. The feedback was enthusiastic and positive. It is always good for agencies and the court to get together with a common purpose with the opportunity to share experiences and to recognise that we are pursuing the same aims. Without exception, all key speakers were congratulated for providing clear, upbeat messages and helpful information."

**The West Yorkshire YOTs - Key Achievements**

The last five years have seen significant progress in the reform of the way young offenders have been dealt with. The changes have worked and this has been acknowledged by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, the Home Office and the Audit Commission, who reported in July 2004 that young offenders are now more likely to receive an intervention and make amends for their wrongdoing, are dealt with more quickly by the courts and are less likely to offend on bail.

The Audit Commission report also noted reconviction rates for young people receiving Reprimands, Final Warnings, Reparation Orders and Action Plan Orders are between 7-10% lower than in 1997. The report highlighted ISSPs as a constructive and cheaper option than custody for persistent young offenders. It also found that magistrates are very satisfied with the service they receive from YOTs .

1. YOTs bring together the multi-agency skills of the different partner agencies to address the offending needs of young offenders to reduce offending behaviour and make communities safer
2. Reform of cautioning from multiple cautioning to clear equitable process of police reprimands and final warnings which had led to much earlier intervention by YOTs to nip offending in the bud resulting in reductions in the of rate of re-offending and fewer victims of crime.
3. Introduction of the new Referral Orders for first-time offenders in court, involving members of the public on community panels across West Yorkshire to address the offending behaviour of young offenders, resulting in reductions in the rate of re-offending and fewer victims of crime.
4. The YOTs have introduced a range of robust community sentences which have the confidence of the courts, including the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Schemes (ISSP) offering 25 hours-a-week supervision linked with electronic surveillance which have produced significant reductions in re-offending.
5. The YOTs work in partnership with the secure estate providing a better standard of care for young people who need to be locked up and robust supervision for these young people when they are serving the community part of their sentence.
6. The YOTs are involved in improving public confidence in the Criminal Justice System and have contributed to meeting the Government's pledge of reducing time from arrest to sentence from 180 days to 71 days which has transformed the attitude of young people who are appearing in court.
7. The YOTs are working to give victims a voice in the way the young offenders are dealt with. The YOTs are contacting victims and giving them a range of opportunities to get involved from having their unanswered questions addressed to meeting directly with the young offender.
8. The YOTs are engaged in a range of prevention activities to ensure more young people are prevented from offending in the first place. These projects target those most at risk of offending and engage them in a range of positive activities to ensure they remain out of trouble.



Rod Morgan was presented with a book, produced by Calderdale YOT, which showcases the writing and poetry of young people who took part in one of the YOTs successful Diversionary Projects. The presentation was made by Jeff Rafter (left), Connexions Network Manager, and Sharon Baxter, Operations Manager, with Calderdale YOT.



The 'Market Place' section of the conference, where 25 partner agencies displayed materials, information and new developments, proved very popular with the 350 delegates. The stands were open during coffee and the extended lunch breaks, and provided a great opportunity for sharing ideas and experiences and first-class networking. Edwina Harrison (above, left) was shown a new on-line schools resource by Inspector John Mason, Force Youth and Schools Liaison Officer and PC John Simpson, Youth Services Liaison Officer. Currently at a pilot stage but planned to go live in the Autumn, it is being developed by West Yorkshire Police and explores a number of issues closely aligned to the Citizenship curriculum. Professor Rod Morgan (above, right) was briefed by Jo Burden, Operations Manager, and Peter Hunter from the Leeds Junior Youth Inclusion Project run by Crime Concern. The Junior YIPs across West Yorkshire work with children aged 10-13 and have proved an effective means of engaging young people and preventing crime in local communities.

All photographs in this publication are by Barry Wilkinson of Picture House Photography and Andrew Milne