

South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board
Annual Review 2011–12

WORKING
TOGETHER

DELIVERING
JUSTICE

REDUCING
REOFFENDING

Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Review of the South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board.

The South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board comprises police, probation, courts, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), youth offending teams, prisons, Legal Services Commission and Victim Support. Local Chief Officers of these agencies met on a quarterly basis throughout 2011–12.

This review provides a summary of the work of the South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board (SYCJB), featuring the highlights of 2011–12: a summary of the work undertaken and achievements within the criminal justice system (CJS) operating across South Yorkshire.



This is the first year that I have personally chaired the Board and I am proud that in spite of the significant changes in senior leaders over the course of the year, our commitment to working in partnership remains strong. We bade farewell to a number of members who had served

the Board and South Yorkshire communities well over a number of years. We also welcomed some new members and successfully introduced them to the challenges and opportunities being faced – together. There is a strong commitment that working in partnership is the way forward if we are to continue to make South Yorkshire a safer place.

In recognition of the resourcing pressures we all face, the Board's support team reduced from 5 officers to 2. In view of similar pressures being faced across our agencies, we introduced a slimmed down delivery structure based around the Board's key priorities

In spite of those pressures, and to ensure that South Yorkshire continues to build on its past achievements, we determined what we would like to achieve over the course of the next 3 years, setting our future strategic direction for 2011–14. This strategy is important as it sets out our shared ambitions for the administration of justice locally, and challenges us to make sure we all contribute towards its achievement.

We do recognise that the CJS cannot operate alone and I am delighted that during 2011–12 we further extended our links, not only with the community safety partnerships, but also with the chief executives of the local authorities in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. We have worked, and

continue to work, collaboratively with the Police Authority and South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat as they lead preparations for an elected Police & Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire in November 2012.

As I look back over the past year, I am proud of our many achievements. Having been there at the outset, I take pride in the continuing success of Restorative Justice within the county – not just because we say so – but because Sheffield Hallam University, who completed an independent evaluation over the course of last year, say so.

A big challenge for everyone is finding new ways of working in a climate of constrained resources - none more so than the challenge of changing a centuries old, paper-based system of administering cases through the CJS, to a digital one. If that were not challenge enough, we were asked to do so within a very limited timeframe - by April 2012.

Whilst there were 'highs' and 'lows' along the way, I am delighted to report that the criminal justice agencies rose successfully to the challenge and by April 2012 achieved the creation and transfer of a digital case file for a large proportion of cases. The challenge continues apace into 2012-13 as we seek to further our digital processes on beyond the courtroom doors.

We have had a positive albeit challenging year and I hope that you find this review both interesting and informative.

Max Sahota
Chair of the South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board
2011–12

Our highlights of 2011–12

> A continued reduction in recorded crime -100,852 recorded crimes in 2011–12 – the lowest level of recorded crime in South Yorkshire in more than 10 years

> South Yorkshire Reduction in Reoffending figures show that we are achieving a reduction of 11.53% (as compared with the national average of 0.39%)

> 2,326 cases successfully dealt with as a Restorative Justice “positive outcome” disposal

> Over 1300 victims of domestic abuse identified as being at risk of serious harm, were supported by Independent Domestic Violence Advocates

> Increased efficiency for all users of our local Magistrates and Crown Court centres by reducing the proportion of trials stood down on the day to take place on another occasion – 158 fewer in our magistrates’ courts; and 39 fewer in the Crown Court than last year

> 98% of applications for legal aid were processed within 2 days of receipt (as compared to the national average of 86%)

> In 2011, 31000 offenders were sentenced through South Yorkshire magistrates’ courts, and 2,850 offenders sentenced through the Crown Court

> More than £7.8M fines revenue was collected through South Yorkshire courts in 2011–12 - £1.6M more than last year

> In excess of £1.6M was confiscated in assets and money from criminals living in South Yorkshire, £0.5M more than last year

> More than 298,000 hours of unpaid work was completed in our local communities by adult offenders fulfilling community sentence orders.

Digital CJS

By 2013, the CJS will be operating digitally and without paper wherever possible in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

This is ambitious and will mean that all information can be passed electronically over a secure network. The aim is for those involved in the court process to be able to access the information they are entitled to as and when they need it, be that in court, in the office or on the move.



SYCJB has played a crucial role in progressing this work. In February 2011, the Board held an event, which encouraged partners within the CJS to move to secure e-mail as an electronic way of exchanging information safely and securely. By February 2012, the number of registered secure e-mail users in South Yorkshire had increased from 39, to 740; and the number of agreed CJS processes where secure e-mail is the preferred method of communication had increased from 19 to 136.

The development of digital working moved at an unrelenting pace: from the introduction of the Police digital case management system, CASPRE, in August, to use of a two-way interface link between the Police & CPS from January, and finally the capability of transferring first hearing papers between all parties, electronically, across the county to 'the courtroom door' by April 2012. With the introduction of this new technology, agencies have not only reduced their reliance on paper but at the same time, improved the service to users by exchanging information more quickly, virtually eliminating mislaid files and allowing multiple users access to case information simultaneously.

Having successfully developed and introduced CASPRE, we sought to exploit the potential of this new technology by introducing a more streamlined system for administering road traffic cases. An important principle established through this project was that the Police were willing to make changes to their procedures that allowed another agency to reap the efficiency gain – in this case, the courts.

“continually improving the services we provide is dependant upon strong partnership working - and this was achieved with the successful introduction of digital working across South Yorkshire”

Julie Collins, Chair of the Efficiency & Effectiveness Steering Group



Improving Quality – Achieving Efficiency

We delivered a number of projects last year aimed at improving our existing services with a view to achieving greater efficiency for all concerned. In the current financial climate, it is essential that we work in partnership to deliver improved services for our users whilst at the same time achieving a more efficient system overall.

Over the course of the year the Police were given permission to extend their role in making charging decisions for low-level offences without reference to specialist CPS lawyers. For those cases that had to be referred to the CPS for charging decisions, the prosecution team worked hard to improve the quality of those submissions.

At our magistrates' courts, we revised our court listing arrangements to reflect changes in demand, our progress being monitored through the introduction of a productivity indicator. Our productivity improved over the course of the year so that by the end of March, we were dealing with an average of 3.21 offenders per session – this compared with 2.84 offenders in 2010–11.

The judiciary led the 'Stop Delaying Justice' initiative, which saw the number of trials being delayed and put off to another day fall from 611 in 2010–11, to 453 in 2011–12. The average time taken from first listing to completion was also reduced - from 3.3 weeks in 2010–11, to 2.9 weeks in 2011–12.

“Magistrates and District Judges have embraced the “Stop Delaying Justice” initiative during the year to reduce the delay in bringing cases before the courts and to improve the experience of victims and witnesses when they attend to give evidence.”

Chris O'Dowd, Deputy Justices Clerk, HMCTS

In the Crown Court, we conducted some of our own enquiries to try and find out how we could operate more efficiently. As a result of those enquiries we identified the need for improved

communication and more realistic timetabling of the behind-the-scenes work, particularly the analysis and reporting of forensic evidence results. Better and more realistic timetabling has ensured that fewer trials have had to be put off to a later date, and yet at the same time, the average waiting time for trials has been reduced in 2011–12 to 11.3 weeks (as

compared with 12.8 weeks in 2010–11).

In Sheffield Crown Court, effective use has been made of a preliminary hearing which has been responsible for identifying 38% of 'Guilty Pleas' at the earliest opportunity. Early acceptance of guilt by offenders has been helpful to victims.



Making Compliance Count

South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board is proud of the county's impressive record in making offenders comply with court orders. Our ambitions in relation to recovering fines, managing offenders on licence and enforcement when offenders breach orders - were all exceeded.

Recovering fines

In 2011–12, more than 21,000 offenders were ordered to pay a fine. In spite of the challenging economic climate, the South Yorkshire courts collected in excess of £7.8 million in fines revenue – an increase of £1.6 million on the previous year.

Following up warrants for 'failing to attend' court

Our record in South Yorkshire sends a clear message to offenders that if they don't turn up to court when required to do so - they will be tracked down, and produced at court within relatively quick time.

Enforcing community orders

Community orders are not a soft option and in South Yorkshire we again exceeded local expectations. Through 'Community Payback', 298,440 hours of unpaid work was undertaken in our local communities. 92% of offenders within South Yorkshire did not commit any further offences whilst completing their order. The message to offenders is that if you don't comply with the court order, however, you will be taken back to court and face the consequences.

Proceeds of Crime

£1.6 million was recovered from criminals based in South Yorkshire during 2011–12 - £0.5 million more than the previous year. This has been made possible through the powers set out under the Proceeds of Crime Act and successful partnership working.



Protecting our communities from harm

In September 2011, 'Crucial Crew' moved from its old premises near Magna in Rotherham, to its new home at the Lifewise Centre, Hellaby. Members of our Victim & Witness Steering Group developed a 20-minute scenario to feature in the new expanded programme aimed at Key Stage 2 – Year 6 pupils from primary schools across South Yorkshire. Prior to this, there was no victim-focussed scenario available. The scenario aimed to raise awareness of how participants might become a victim of crime, how to safeguard against it; and at the same time helped participants appreciate what the personal impact of low-level offending or anti-social behaviour might be on a victim.

In the first 6 months of the academic year, the victim and witness scenario was included in the Crucial Crew programmes delivered to Barnsley and Rotherham schools – more than 5400 visitors in total (which also included a number of accompanying adults). Between 79% - 84% of those visitors regarded the scenario as 'very relevant'.

“Very Informative and powerful”

a Barnsley School

“Excellent”

a Rotherham School

A new national requirement was introduced in April 2011, to undertake Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). These reviews are undertaken where someone has been killed by their current or former partner. DHRs have been introduced so that lessons are learnt from each case and, most importantly, help prevent future violence and deaths from occurring. DHRs also aim to improve local and national approaches to tackling domestic violence.

The countywide Specialist Domestic Violence group examined the new requirement and contributed towards ensuring that appropriate arrangements were in place for the conduct of DHRs and, that any lessons learned are shared across the county so that future potential domestic homicide victims may be better protected.

The first DHR conducted in the county, in Sheffield, attracted commendation from the Home Office.

“..The panel would like to commend you on this review which they believe to be of an excellent standard”.

Chair of the Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Panel



Protecting our Victims from further harm

“I am greatly encouraged by the continued partnership working with all agencies, ensuring we achieve and continue to achieve the Board’s ambition and priorities; especially ‘Victim and Witness Satisfaction – to place the individual and diverse needs of victims and witnesses at the heart of the local CJS delivery.’”

Christine Empson, Divisional Manager, Victim Support and Chair of Victim & Witness Steering Group

Arrangements were put in place during 2012 to protect vulnerable victims from unsolicited or unwanted telephone contact by offenders remanded in custody or serving sentences at Doncaster Prison.

Supporting Victims of Domestic Violence

In 2011–12, 1362 high risk victims of domestic abuse were referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference – MARAC. Partners attending MARAC meetings share information about those victims at risk of murder or serious harm, from which a risk focused, coordinated safety plan is drawn up to support and protect the victim.

Victims referred to MARAC were all offered support from Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) based across the four districts in South Yorkshire. IDVAs provided specialist support to victims, not only in relation to criminal proceedings, but also helped victims with their recovery – working with a range of agencies and service providers to ensure that victims received support tailored to their own specific needs.

Victim Personal Statements

As reported last year, in 2010–11, an internal publicity campaign took place aimed at raising awareness amongst staff working in the local CJS of the importance of Victim Personal Statements. Victim Personal Statements are widely recognised as a way of ensuring that a victim’s voice is considered and heard in court prior to sentencing.

The case study below is based on a case dealt with during 2011–12 that contained a Victim Personal Statement. Extracts from the sentencing remarks made indicate how magistrates took account of the victim’s perspective when determining the appropriate sentence.

Case Study: Doncaster Youth Court – Assault & Burglary

The victim was walking along the street at night when he was attacked, apparently without provocation. He was knocked to the ground and kicked, sustaining a grazed back and bruised eye. The offender was wearing a hood with his face covered. The offender admitted in interview to being drunk having had approx 8 pints of strong lager. He said he couldn’t remember the incident except he started shouting at the victim for no apparent reason. He then approached him and pushed him. The victim pushed him back and at this point the offender punched the victim to the jaw. He said he punched him ‘a few times’ but that he didn’t kick the victim - but his recollection was so vague he could not say for sure. The offender left the scene and met up with a friend who knew the victim and encouraged the offender to go to the victim’s house ‘to sort it out’. He went to the victim’s flat and forced his way in. He was so aggressive that the victim locked himself in his bedroom but before leaving, the offender stole an Xbox and a mobile phone, which were later recovered.

The prosecutor referred to the Victim Personal Statement completed and held on file. In sentencing, the chairman of the bench said,

“In determining the level of culpability and harm, we have taken into account the suffering of the victim and that there was no provocation.... We have responsibility to victims and to society. We have to take in account the welfare of young people. Anybody can make a mistake; you need to learn from mistakes.... We make a maximum Referral Order for 12 months and ask that part of the order involves putting it right personally with the victim.”

Reducing Re-Offending across South Yorkshire

There is a clear focus on reducing reoffending both for the Local Criminal Justice Board and the Community Safety Partnerships across South Yorkshire. There have been a number of key activities undertaken throughout the year with this explicit aim in mind.

Restorative Justice, IMPACT offender management are 2 key strands of work – details of which feature below – but in addition, the countywide Reducing Reoffending Steering Group has been faced with fresh challenges and a desire to better understand what else needs to be done to achieve further improvements.

Payment By Results

In October 2011, a new contract to run HMP Doncaster was awarded to Serco. This contract was unusual in that it was one of the first to have a Payment by Results element included within it. The 'Result' sought is a reduction in reoffending for an identified cohort of offenders that leave the prison. As a result of this new challenge, Doncaster prison and its partners have responded positively to the challenge by offering on-going support to offenders released back into the community with a clear and distinct focus on preventing them from re-offending. This community-based resource is working closely with the established IMPACT teams to help ensure that multi-agency work is fully and properly joined up.

Third Sector Voice & Influence Forum

The local third sector plays a crucial role in supporting our ambitions to reduce reoffending – often working closely with offenders day-to-day and thereby gaining a good insight into the issues that affect them and their offending behaviour. We believe that they are well placed to help us identify 'gaps' in service provision and spot issues that may be key to helping turn offenders lives around.

In June 2011, a third sector voice and influence forum was established to enhance third sector involvement in our strategic planning and their influence in determining local activity and priorities. Its members – 29 to date – advised the county reoffending group on what ought to feature in its priorities for 2012–13.

“I am confident that the group can go on to provide the Reducing Reoffending Steering Group with dynamic and creative solutions for reducing reoffending, as well as bring extra resources into South Yorkshire to fund new and innovative initiatives”.

Gavin Hudson (REMEDI), Chair of the 3rd Sector Voice & Influence Forum in 2011–12

Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice – or RJ as it is commonly referred to – is a victim-centred approach, which firstly gives power to the victim, enabling them to influence the

punishment of the offender and have their voice heard. The offender is held responsible for their actions, and also given the opportunity to explain their behaviour to the victim, and repair any harm caused.

In 2010–11, the South Yorkshire Restorative Justice Programme was introduced. The early phase of this Programme focussed upon first time offenders who have committed low level crime as an alternative way of dealing with such cases rather than going through the more formal court-based process. This is believed to have a positive impact on the community, as their faith is restored in local police and justice as they can often see and experience immediate results.

Over the course of 2011–12, 2326 cases were dealt with by way of RJ – about 1000 more than the previous year. This gave a clear indication that the system was becoming fully embedded as confidence has grown in its use and application.

Progress of the RJ Programme was independently evaluated by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) over the course of 2011–12.

“(victims) reported feeling empowered by their experience of RJ and indicated that it gave them a greater sense of control”

Extract from SHU final evaluation report.

In addition to the valuing the positive experience of victims, CJS partners were keen to find out whether an RJ disposal had any lasting effect on the offenders' behaviour. The evaluation reported, “RJ had had a significant impact on many of the offenders involved.” Although acknowledging that it was still relatively early days in its evolution, the evaluation team reported positive indications regarding offenders' propensity to go on to re-offend.

“(there are) encouraging indications that offenders who had received an RJ disposal were less likely to be reconvicted”

Extract from SHU final evaluation report

During 2011–12, RJ moved into a new phase in its development in South Yorkshire with the introduction of several schemes (commenced as pilot schemes), post conviction, as part of an offender's punishment and rehabilitation plan. Unlike the earlier phase of work, this phase focuses upon providing Restorative Justice in addition to the normal court-based process rather than as an alternative. A number of these approaches have focussed on the county's most persistent offenders where, if successful, should have the greatest positive impact in reducing reoffending and keeping our communities safe. Progress has been deliberately cautious in order to make sure RJ is used only in appropriate circumstances, and in a way that accords with the victims' needs and wishes.

Making an IMPACT in South Yorkshire

IMPACT (Integrated Model of Partners Addressing Crime Together) has the aim of reducing the number of victims of crime by targeting adult and youth offenders in the community who present the highest risk of re-offending.

South Yorkshire Probation Trust joined forces with South Yorkshire Police, youth offending teams, prisons, drugs teams, housing providers and local authorities to work together to prevent many crimes from occurring. They do this by identifying and effectively managing prolific offenders who damage our communities.

2011–12 has seen the IMPACT teams further develop and refine their new approach and working practices, establish new contacts and connections, and start to evaluate where things are working well (and identify where there is room for further improvement).

First, a predictor tool was developed by Probation

colleagues, which is helping IMPACT teams identify and target the right offenders to incorporate within the programme.

Second, a performance management framework was developed to start to monitor the effect – not only on its primary aim of reducing reoffending, but also some of the known triggers that can lead to reoffending such as housing, employment, and drugs management status.

As mentioned above, some of these offenders were also part of the recently expanded restorative justice programme.

Over the course of the year, a number of offenders were successfully managed out of the IMPACT programme – no longer posing the high risk of re-offending that they did at the point they entered the programme.

IMPACT Case Study:

“The offender has a long history of serious acquisitive crime such as burglary and has been heavily involved with a Sheffield organised crime group since his early teens.

“Originally released on licence in January 2011, he was soon identified as an IMPACT case although relatively quickly was involved in a serious offence and recalled back to prison.

“A clear plan for re-release was put in place. Strict licence conditions including curfew, exclusion zones, none associations, daily reporting and drug testing were agreed by the multi agency IMPACT team.

“On release, the offender was picked up by the team from the prison gates and was able to see immediate benefits of being involved with IMPACT. Close monitoring was put in place by the Police enforcement team and accommodation was secured with Target Housing well away from the exclusion zone. Initially he struggled with loneliness but the team helped by identifying local groups and amending his licence conditions to allow him to attend.

“Separation from the organized crime group, many of whom he considered family, was hard and left him finding for himself for the first time. He had to be taught the basics and the Offender Manager, tenancy support officer and his drugs worker enabled him to put these things in place.

“Work around drugs and alcohol has been ongoing together with work to help him fully recognise the impact of his offending behaviour. Licence conditions have gradually been reduced and he has been given a great deal of encouragement for his positive response.

“He has reduced drug and alcohol use and looks healthy and happy. He has commented that this is the first time he feels people have a genuine interest in him. This has led to him opening up about his past and feelings. His long term partner, who did not feel she could maintain their relationship due to his offending, has seen a marked change in him and the relationship is developing positively. One to one work on securing employment has now been arranged.

“Nine months into this licence there had been no new offences, no police intelligence suggesting a return to old behaviours and compliance on licence. This is the longest period since his early teens that he has managed to keep clear of crime.”

‘By working together, the key partners have developed an excellent Integrated Offender Management scheme across the county, which links in with the prison based ‘Through the Gate’ programme. By working together on this and the Restorative Justice initiative, we are making a significant IMPACT in South Yorkshire to make our communities safer.’

Lynda Marginson, Chair of the Reducing Reoffending Steering Group

Working in partnership



Preparing for the arrival of the Police & Crime Commissioner

During 2011–12, we worked closely with the Community Safety Partnerships and South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat in preparation for the election in November 2012 of the first South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner. On 29 March 2012, we co-hosted an event with the Police Authority aimed at raising awareness of the forthcoming election for a wide variety of agencies likely to be affected by the changes. With over 70 representatives from across public, private and third sector organisations, all parties left with a better idea of how the forthcoming changes are likely to affect them.

Preparations for the changes are continuing during 2012–13, details of which can be found on a dedicated website – Think PCC. The weblink is as follows: <http://www.southyorks.gov.uk/thinkpcc/About.aspx>

Working in partnership across Yorkshire & the Humber

Work continued throughout 2011–12 to harmonise working practices wherever it made sense to do so; to make savings and efficiency gains by sharing good practice in the way in which criminal justice agencies work together and by actively seeking opportunities to harmonise processes. A number of criminal justice agencies are now organised across a broader geographical remit than just South Yorkshire – and this has served to highlight difference, and suggested where improvements might be made. Where sensible and more cost effective to do so, new projects or services are being implemented on a regional basis.



“Making the right things happen for Sheffield”

Throughout 2011–12, the Criminal Justice Board has been part of Sheffield Executive Board - working with senior leaders from across the city who, collectively, lead on issues of city-wide significance. Of particular note is the work undertaken to produce the State of Sheffield Report 2012, which provides a platform from which the partners can help shape and develop a new vision for Sheffield City in 2020.

Further details of the partnership - its aims, ambitions and achievements can be found following the web link: <https://www.sheffieldfirst.com>

Looking ahead 2012–13



“The Local Criminal Justice Board welcomes the advent of local Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and looks forward to working with the successful candidate once elected next November. We have been working this year in close partnership with the Police Authority preparing for the PCC who we see as, potentially, a key partner in facilitating greater efficiency and effectiveness in the future”.

Roz Brown,
Vice-Chair of South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board .

In 2012–13, the Board is continuing its efforts to deliver its strategic aim and ambitions in the challenging economic climate. There will continue to be particular emphasis placed upon

- > Helping support the area in its preparations for the arrival of the Police & Crime Commissioner
- > Further expanding the use of a digital case file beyond the courtroom doors
- > Exploiting opportunities to make more effective use of existing facilities— such as prison–court video links; and, exploring opportunities to make relatively modest investment in order to realise greater efficiencies – such as enabling some police officers to give their evidence using video technology rather than having to attend court
- > Recognising ways in which we can better protect and support youngsters facing domestic violence and those having to attend court
- > Strengthening local partnership arrangements aimed at protecting the most vulnerable – particularly victims of domestic violence and Hate Crime
- > Establishing a Victim Voice & Influence group
- > Conducting an examination of ‘offender health’ issues with a view to determining future priorities aimed at reducing reoffending and keeping our communities safe
- > On-going development of IMPACT, and the use and application of Restorative approaches in a variety of settings

Members of the 2012–13 South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board are:

Julie Collins

Philip Houlden, followed by Alison Watts
from October 2012

Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service
www.hmcts.gov.uk

Roz Brown (Vice Chair)

South Yorkshire Probation Trust
www.syprobation.gov.uk

Max Sahota (Chair)

Rob Odell

South Yorkshire Police
www.southyorks.police.uk

Gerry Wareham

CPS
www.cps.gov.uk/yorkshire_humberside

Joel Hanna

Youth Offending Teams

www.sheffield-yos.org.uk

www.rotherham.gov.uk/youthservices

www.barnsley.gov.uk/preventing-young-people-offending

www.doncaster.gov.uk/Services/Youth_Offending_Service

Christine Empson

Victim Support

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Julie Parkin

Legal Services Commission

www.legalservices.gov.uk

John Biggin

Doncaster Prison

www.hmpdoncaster.gov.uk

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD**
Reducing crime. Increasing justice



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