



# Special Newsletter SEND

29<sup>th</sup> March 2018

## Celebrating the work of over fifty Youth Offending Teams and their Local Authority partners

### **Supporting young people with special needs who end up in the youth justice system**

Over fifty Locality Teams have been working on a project to secure better outcomes for children and young people with special education needs (SEN) who end up in the youth justice system.



The two-year Department for Education-sponsored project, led by the national education charity Achievement for All (AFA), working in close partnership with the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers (AYM) and researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University, has helped to illuminate the distinct problems that many young people with SEN in the youth justice system face.



The project team has identified and shared best practice from all over the country in addressing these complex needs and has created a set of quality standards for all participating area partnerships to aspire to.

At the end of 2017 the project was highly commended by the Howard League in the category "Organisation of the Year".



**ACHIEVEMENT  
FOR ALL**



**Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University**

**A partnership project funded by DfE**

We are delighted to announce the following awards for these Youth Offending Teams who have achieved the necessary standards:

# SUCCESS

### Awarded Quality Lead Status

- ❖ Buckinghamshire
- ❖ County Durham
- ❖ Milton Keynes
- ❖ Nottinghamshire
- ❖ Sheffield
- ❖ Southwark
- ❖ Staffordshire
- ❖ Stockton-On-Tees
- ❖ Warwickshire
- ❖ West Berkshire

### Awarded Quality Mark Status

- ❖ Bedfordshire and Bedford
- ❖ Birmingham
- ❖ Brent
- ❖ Cheshire East
- ❖ Islington
- ❖ Kirklees
- ❖ Lancashire
- ❖ Salford
- ❖ Somerset
- ❖ Southampton
- ❖ Slough
- ❖ Wiltshire



The first tranche of awards will be presented formally to the participating areas at the AYM Annual General Meeting in Rugby on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018. For more details contact [jon.obyrne@aym.org.uk](mailto:jon.obyrne@aym.org.uk)

The following area partnerships working towards attaining Quality Mark or Quality Lead standards in the next twelve months

- |                                |                         |  |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| ❖ Barking and Dagenham         | ❖ Haringey              | ❖ Solihull   |
| ❖ Bath and North East Somerset | ❖ Hillingdon            | ❖ St Helens  |
| ❖ Bradford                     | ❖ Knowsley              | ❖ Stockport  |
| ❖ Bristol                      | ❖ Manchester            | ❖ Suffolk  |
| ❖ Bromley                      | ❖ Norfolk               | ❖ Surrey   |
| ❖ Calderdale                   | ❖ Northamptonshire      | ❖ Walsall  |
| ❖ Camden                       | ❖ Nottingham City       | ❖ West Mercia (Shropshire, Telford, Worcestershire and Hereford) |
| ❖ Essex                        | ❖ Oldham                |  |
| ❖ Gloucestershire              | ❖ Redbridge             |  |
| ❖ Hackney                      | ❖ Richmond and Kingston |  |
|                                | ❖ Sandwell              |  |

## THE CHALLENGE

Marius Frank, Achievement for All Project Leader says:

*“Few people outside the youth justice system realise the significant numbers of young people with special education needs who end up in trouble with the police, in front of magistrates, or worse, end up in custody. Some children and young people with special educational needs, who also have a range of social disadvantages, are particularly vulnerable.”*



*“The reasons are manifold: some of these young people have been excluded from school for poor behaviour. Many young people know that they are “different” to other children, but they and their families might not know why - as a result, over time, they have learned to “camouflage” their learning difficulties behind layer upon layer of “front”: all you see is the poor behaviour, which for many has seen them excluded from school.*

*“Others, due to their social disadvantage, be it poverty, absent or dysfunctional parenting, ethnicity or combinations of all the above factors, find themselves behind multiple barriers to academic progress in the school system. We must also acknowledge the profound impact that childhood trauma and neglect can have on a young developing mind, leading to emotional wellbeing and mental issues that may emerge during adolescence.*



*“Finally, and perhaps most tragically, the fragile social skills some of these young people have lay them open to exploitation by criminal gangs, as drug runners for example or, as the recent atrocities committed on vulnerable young women in Rochdale, Oxford and similar cases attest, groomed for sexual purposes”.*

## THE SOLUTION

Marius continues:

*“These complex needs can be met when a Youth Offending Team is working in close and effective partnership with schools and academies, Local Authority SEND Team, Social Care Services, and Clinical Commissioning Groups who have the responsibility to deploy health resources: our awards acknowledge and celebrate policies, processes and practice that create a team around the child, either diverting them away from youth justice pathways, ensuring robust support plans when leaving custody, or preventing these young people from entering the youth justice system in the first place.”*

*“There are also significant benefits to communities, to society and the public purse through effective early identification and early help. “Many reports and research*



# Endorsements

*“Going on this journey has had a huge impact on our offer to young people with special educational needs at Southwark YOS. It has helped us to realise what we were good at but also what could be better and given us a clear focus and goal to keep improving. YOS and SEND are now working more closely together than ever before and as a result understanding and dialog regarding special educational needs and disabilities (both undiagnosed and diagnosed) within the YOS has risen hugely. This will only lead to better outcomes for young people within the criminal justice system”.*



**Daniel Hogan, Education, Employment and Training Officer. Southwark YOS.**

*“We are delighted to achieve both the Quality Mark and Quality Lead Status, from the Youth Justice SEND Project. This award shows the commitment of our staff teams to appropriately support children and young people with Special Educational Need's or Disabilities in the Youth Justice System. The benchmarking and assessment process for the Youth Justice SEND Project has really helped us to reflect on what we do well and what we could do even better. We appreciate support received from the Youth Justice SEND Project and now have access to the fantastic SEN Bubble resource.”*



**Miriam Sigsworth, YOT & Targeted Support Manager Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council**



*“We are very proud of the work of our Youth Offending Service. This award recognises the work they are doing to support some of our most vulnerable young people and to help them make the right choices for their futures.”*

**Councillor Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet Portfolio Lead for Children and Young People County Durham**

*“I'd like to thank you for all the support. From the beginning of the project I remember saying I was inspired after talking with you and doing our benchmarking. You've really helped us focus on what we needed to work on and given us practical tips and ideas to implement. Ultimately, this has helped us to make positive changes, making a real difference to the young people we are working with and the ways in which we work with them. So, thank you!”*



**Andrea Brazier YOT Service Manager Wiltshire**

*“The YOT and SEND teams have embraced the advice and guidance from the project – they used the benchmarking exercise to identify specific areas of focus and turned the spotlight on these. We have seen improved understanding by practitioners on the early identification of SEND issues for young people in the youth justice system, which has translated into a better knowledge around the issues our young people are facing and enhanced practice and intervention. Joint working has increased with a collaborative approach between YOT and SEND lead workers, working together to improve the outcomes for our young people. We are delighted with the achievement for all quality mark and committed to working towards becoming quality leaders.”*



**Susan Tanner Head of Joint Commissioning Wiltshire**

*“We have been delighted to engage with the DfE, AYM, MMU in this extremely worthwhile project. Our aim is to continue supporting youth justice partnerships after the contract expires, which aligns with our mission to support all children and young people regardless of their background, challenge or need. We will continue to engage with all 54 areas where we have formed a partnership. Beyond which, there are a further eighty areas across the country where we will aim to support young people with complex needs to have their life outcomes transformed. We would welcome your engagement with us and our partners in this profoundly important work.”*



**Prof Sonia Blandford, founder and CEO of Achievement for All**



*“The Association of YOT Managers has been very pleased to have had the opportunity to be part of the project team implementing the SEND Reforms into the youth justice sector. Entering into a formal partnership with an organisation which was previously unknown to us carried significant reputational (and possibly some financial) risk to us. In the event, however, we have benefited greatly from the new relationships with Achievement for All and Manchester Metropolitan University. More importantly, the project has done much to raise awareness of the reforms in YOTs, to develop YOT managers’ understanding of the impact of SEND on the children with whom we work, and to strengthen their relationships with local partners.*

*“Our links to around 90% of the YOT managers in England have, in our view, given the project strong credibility in the sector and contributed to a very high level of engagement over the two years. We are committed to maintaining the new Youth Justice SEND Quality Mark, developed in partnership with AfA, after the project concludes, and to using the products and processes developed by the project within our existing Sector-Led Improvement programme.”*

**Lesley Tregear, Chair of AYM**

## The Awards explained

Using a methodology that has supported improvement work in thousands of schools and academies across the country<sup>2</sup> over the past eight years, Achievement for All has adapted this framework for use in the youth justice system.

To attain the Quality Mark, area partnerships have to demonstrate the development of relationships, networks, protocols, policy and practice to support children and young people with SEN in the youth justice system. We have used a benchmarking tool, developed with the help of an Advisory Panel of youth justice experts, to ensure consistent and robust standards are applied.

Quality Lead is something more: we are looking for widespread embedded and sustained practice across all ten judgement criteria, supported by innovation or ideas that can be shared with other partnerships to stimulate creative thinking and improvement, backed up by statistics and case studies of impact. We have set the bar high and are delighted that so many areas have risen to the challenge.

## Brief history of project

In April 2016, Achievement for All (AFA) won a competitive bid for a one-year Department for Education system improvement contract: To secure better outcomes for children and young people with special education needs in the youth justice system.

Along with prime partners the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers (AYM) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), a series of national workshops were programmed to harvest knowledge and opinions from over 400 frontline professionals; surveys extended active engagement to 80% youth offending teams across the country; young people in the secure estate (with special education needs) were also interviewed by trained researchers; an extensive, free-to-access online professional development service, the AFA Youth Justice SEND Bubble, was created, with over 600 professional opening learning accounts within five months of the platform's launch; and, using a specially created improvement framework ("Ten Key Statements") a map of effective practice was published, aligned to a self-evaluation tool:

<http://res.afa3as.org.uk/YJBubble/CaseStudyMap2.7/index.html>

The DfE, impressed by the work undertaken in Year 1, extended the contract for another year. The brief was to drive system improvement by working directly with 35 Youth Offending Teams, supporting self-evaluation, identifying strengths, and sharing effective practice so that different areas could learn from successful practice, partnership working and deployment of resources from other areas.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.paperturn-view.com/achievement-for-all/achievement-for-all-impact-report-2015-16-draft?pid=ODA8093&p=15> Total by Impact Report 2015-16 was 3,667. The very latest figures (as of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018) report 3171 schools and academies have engaged with our Schools Programme, and over 1000 other schools have participated in other training and dissemination workshops.



Using a mature AFA methodology that has supported improvement work in thousands of schools and academies across the country over the past eight years, Quality Mark and Quality Lead standards were defined, over 50 area partnerships benchmarked, and supported to bring professionals from different disciplines to work more effectively together, meeting the needs of young people with complex vulnerabilities. For example, a critical finding from Year 1 was the extent of SEND within the youth justice system is much higher than official statistics suggested. Children and young people were identified with SEND that had not been previously identified by schools.

Year 2 of the project has been remarkably successful, so much so that it was recognised recently by an award from the Howards League, even though we are not a frontline service! Quality Lead and Quality Mark outcomes are detailed elsewhere in this press release.



## Beyond Year 2

The Project Team were aware that the DfE funding would end after Year 2. However, AFA and AYM are totally committed to sustaining our support for the national network of Youth Offending Services and their associate Local Authorities, Social and Care providers and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

The partnership intends to continue to deploy the Youth Justice SEND Bubble as a professional development tool from our own resource (although keeping it updated will be a key target when attracting potential funding). The Area Partnerships still “in action” will be supported beyond the contract termination date of 31st March to help them attain Quality Mark Status. Again, the costs will be met internally by Achievement for All and Association of Youth Offending Team Managers.

AFA and AYM are developing the Quality Mark and Quality Lead framework into a paid-for service, so that the remaining 80+ youth offending services around the country can access the provision... and of course current award holders can seek re-designation in three years' time.



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