

## LEEDS SEES FALL IN YOUTH CRIME AND RE-OFFENDING

Figures released today (25/1/06) show an 8% fall in levels of youth crime in Leeds over the last year, and also a 4% drop in the numbers of young criminals who reoffend.

Numbers of young reoffenders drop by a staggering 29% amongst those taking part in the city's Restorative Justice programme, in which the perpetrators have to make amends to the victims of their crimes.

The figures are being taken as further evidence of the council's success in making Leeds a safer place to live.

### **Councillor Peter Harrand, executive board member responsible for work with young offenders said:**

"Leeds' success owes a lot to the fact that we don't just slap an Asbo on young people and think that's all we need to do.

"We have been doing a lot of work to prevent young people from becoming involved in crime in the first place, and making sure that those who do offend confront their actions, make amends, and get their lives back on the rails again."

### **Councillor Les Carter, executive board member responsible for community safety added:**

"Increasingly around Leeds, young vandals and petty criminals are getting the message that if they cannot behave, they will be found and brought to book.

"These figures are proof of the effectiveness of much serious, professional and co-ordinated action including Asbos, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Dispersal Orders, by a range of organisations across the city to ensure that Leeds is safer."

Figures for 10-17 year olds entering the youth justice system for the first time since 2003 are as follows:

<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
1983	2076	1917
(Baseline)	(+5%)	(-8%)

Leeds tracks re-offending rates of young people coming into the youth justice system. Every year one quarter of all young offenders are tracked to see whether they offend again after one year and again after two years.

The figures for reoffending amongst these young people are as follows:

<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
65%	61%	57%

The period has also seen a reduction in the number of Asbos being issued, following the initial high demand, as problem behaviour continues to improve:

<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
61	226	127

Leeds YOS has been particularly effective in engaging young people subject to Final Warnings. These voluntary interventions help to engage the young person with the effects of offending at the earliest possible stage in the Youth Justice System.

Leeds has successfully worked with 90% of young people subject to a Final Warning on a voluntary basis over the last 12 months and reduced their offending rates by over 7%.

Young people subject to referral orders appear before a local panel of trained volunteers. The panel agree a programme for the young person aimed at making reparation for the harm they caused and to prevent further offending. Young people who were sentenced to Referral Order in 2004 showed a reduction in re-offending rates of more than 13% when compared with a similar group in 2003.

Leeds Youth Offending Service uses restorative justice to balance the concerns of the victim and the community with the need to re-integrated the offender with society. Through mediation and restorative conferencing Leeds Youth Offending Service has been able to deal constructively with the impact of crime.

A cohort of priority offenders who were involved in domestic burglary, robbery, violence or vehicle theft were targeted for restorative justice work which required them to make amends to their victims. This group were 29.4% less likely to re-offend in the same manner as a control group who did not have restorative justice included as part of their order.

Young people who work with the Youth Offending Service as part of their order have shown consistent improvement and reduction in re-offending rates since 2001, indicating that reducing offending in Leeds is an ongoing trend.

Leeds Youth Offending Service has engaged both young people and their parents in voluntary and statutory orders and works with both these groups to address the offending behaviour of young people. The last two years shows that there is both a reduction in new offenders and those working with Leeds Youth Offending Service are being helped to break the cycle of offending and anti-social behaviour.