



**Sheffield Youth Justice Projects**

# **Appropriate Adult Scheme**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010**

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## **1. Introduction**

Under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984, young people (10-16yrs inclusive) and adults (17yrs+) who are deemed vulnerable (i.e. those who may have mental health problems and/or learning difficulties) cannot be interviewed by Police Officers (except in exceptional circumstances) about their suspected involvement in a criminal offence in the absence of an Appropriate Adult (AA).

The AA's role is to safeguard the interests of vulnerable suspects, to facilitate communication and ensure the interview and treatment of suspects is conducted properly and fairly. SOVA has been commissioned by Sheffield Youth Offending Service since 1997 to provide the AA Scheme in Sheffield. SOVA recruits, provides Open College Network (OCN) accredited training to, and deploys volunteers to act as AA for vulnerable suspects when parent(s)/carer(s) are unable or unwilling to attend.

The most common demand on the service is to attend custody suites in Sheffield to support detainees who are to be interviewed by Police Officers. AAs with SYJP also attend custody suites to:-

- Witness identification papers being served
- Witness identification procedures (i.e. video image capture of suspect)
- Witness strip and/or intimate searches
- Witness informed consent for searches to take place in the absence of an AA
- Witness drugs test procedure.

The Scheme is staffed by a Project Manager (28hrs p/w), Darren Smith, and full-time Support Officer, John Graham, (35 hrs p/w) who left on January 29 to work for another SOVA project. Stephen Walker, Administrative Assistant since August 2009 commenced his induction period as Support Officer on April 1, 2010.

### SYJP Staff (October 2009)



Back Farheen Khan (Mentoring support officer) and Darren Smith  
Front (left) Stephen Walker, (right) John Graham

## 2 Objectives and Targets

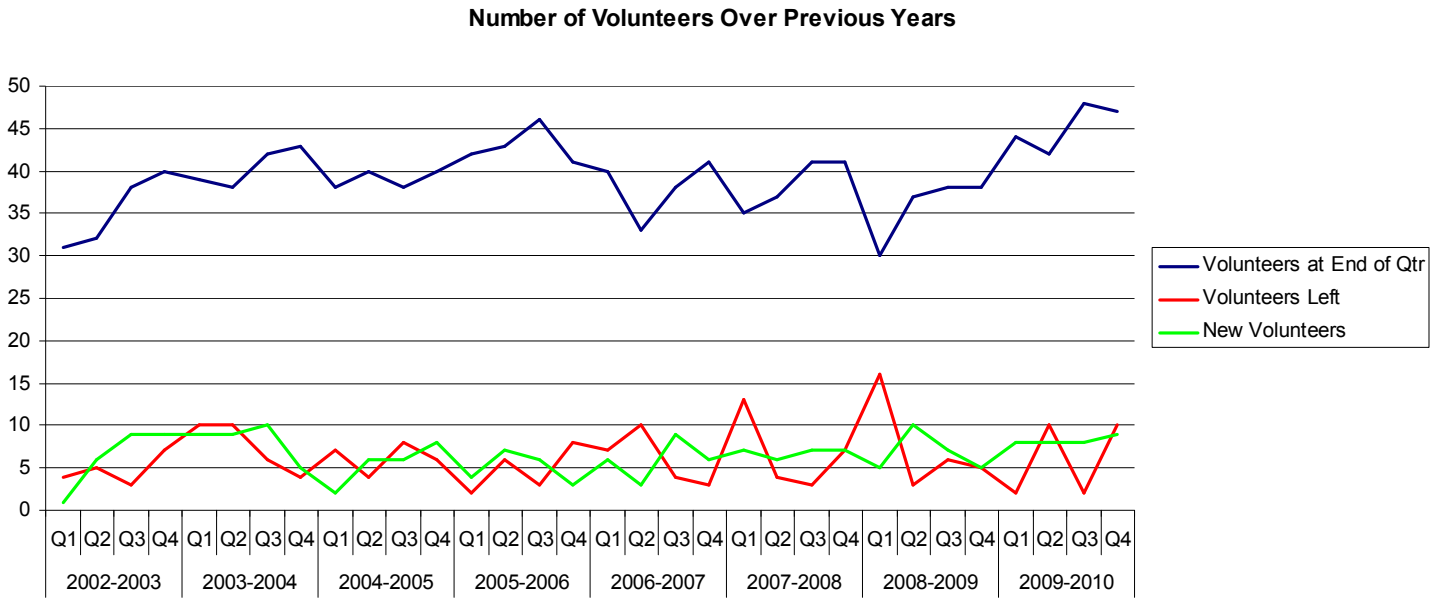
The AA Scheme is contracted to:-

- I. maintain a pool of 45 volunteer AAs
- II. provide AAs for at least 90% of an anticipated 1,000 requests from South Yorkshire Police (Sheffield only).
- III. Identify a volunteer to accept a callout within 45 minutes of a request being made.
- IV. Provide 24/7/365 cover of volunteer availability

## 3 Achievements of Period

i. Records show the Scheme is successful in meeting its contractual obligations. The graph below (fig 1.) shows the turnover of volunteers from 2002 to present. Over the past 7 years (records preceding this have been archived) the project has retained between 30 and 50 volunteers and has 47 at the start of the 2010-'11 contractual period. Peaks of volunteers leaving are usually the result of removing volunteers who have been inactive for a long period of time and tend to correspond to the end of Universities' academic year when some student volunteers leave Sheffield.

Fig 1



ii. The number of callouts volunteers and staff respond to is dependent on the number of requests made by SYP Officers in Sheffield. The Scheme received a total of 804 requests for an AA (see table 1, below) and on only 14 occasions were there no volunteers available.

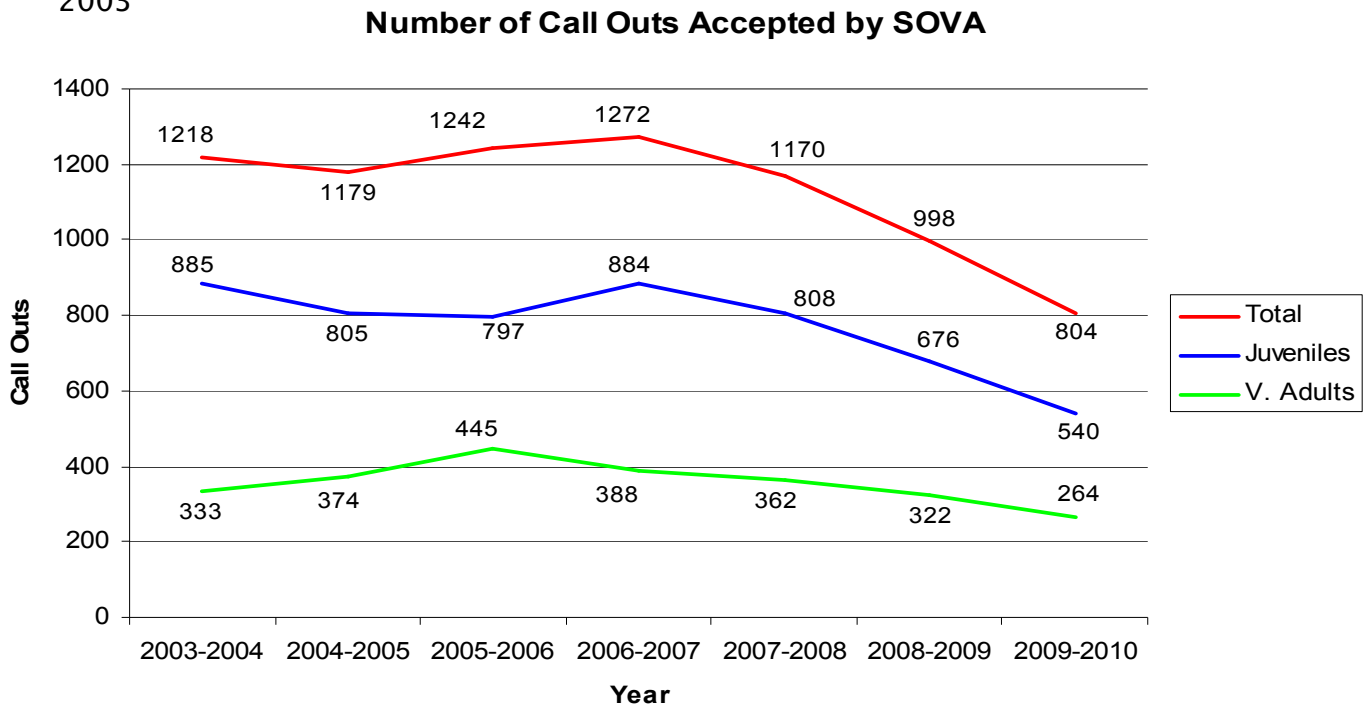
Table 1. Total number of requests for AAs

	Juveniles	Vulnerable Adults	Total
Requests	540	264	<b>804</b>
NVA*	8	6	14
CBVA**	16	6	22
CAVA***	14	3	17
<b>Total Accepted</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>790</b>
Within 45 mins	510 (96%)	249 (96.5%)	759 (96%)

\*No Volunteer Available      \*\*Cancelled Before Volunteer Arrived (at police station)  
 \*\*\*Cancelled After Volunteer Arrived

The Scheme's link police officer, Inspector Paul Catley, has stated there are various explanations for the sudden decline in requests for SOVA AAs this year. First, there have been approximately 25% fewer arrests in Sheffield over the past 12 months. Second, many offenders are being dealt with using a raft of options other than arrest in line with integrated offender management initiatives making detention in custody unnecessary. Third, officers may be experiencing more success in encouraging parents, relatives or guardians to attend to minimise reliance on SOVA.

Fig 2 below shows the number of call-outs SOVA AAs have attended for since April 2003



iii. Of the 790 requests that were accepted, 759 (96%) were accepted within 45 minutes.

iv. According to records of requests for AAs made by custody staff at Ecclesfield police station there is no evidence to show that any AAs were requested between midnight and 7a.m. from any of the custody suites covered during the whole year. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest this is probably due to custody staff not requesting an AA from SOVA because it is known there was no-one available rather than AAs not being needed. Scheme staff are optimistic that AA cover between midnight and 7a.m. could be provided but the matter raises questions about the provision of staff availability for supporting volunteers during these times that need to be addressed by SOVA senior management and Sheffield YOS should this level of cover be deemed necessary.

In recognition of the AA Scheme's quality of service a South Yorkshire Police Certificate of Commendation was presented by Inspector Paul Catley on behalf of Chief Inspector Dave Ambler to the Project Manager, Darren Smith, who gratefully received it (pictured below) on behalf of all AA staff and volunteers both past & present.



The certificate states:

***“The professionalism, dedication and flexibility of the volunteers has provided an excellent quality of service to detained persons and the South Yorkshire Police Service”.***

## 4 Volunteers

The scheme had a total of 71 volunteers over the year. There were 38 volunteers at the outset and 33 people, some who had attended training prior to April 2009 (i.e. not included in table 2, below), were accepted following their post-course interview. Four training courses were delivered. Table 2 below shows the number of volunteers who commenced (out of the number invited to participate), completed and were accepted following their post-course interview.

Table 2

Course	Commenced	Completed	Accepted
April/May	10/10	9	8
June	4/6	4	4
October	10/11	10	8
January	10/10	10	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>34/37</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>26</b>

Scheme staff received some very encouraging feedback regarding the assessment of volunteer portfolios submitted for Open College Network accreditation. SOVA’s lead Internal Moderator stated:-

*“Overall, the standard of work was excellent with the AA files well written and showed good understanding with activities linked perfectly to the Assessment Criteria – Absolutely Lovely !”.*

Three refresher training sessions were held for volunteers with at least 12 months service with 11 volunteers attending. This training proved to be very successful according to comments provided on the evaluation forms and verbally to project staff. One volunteer stated:-

*“It was conducted very well and all my questions were answered . . . which makes me more confident that I am following the*

*correct procedures and protocols”.*

#### 4.1 Volunteer Recruitment

Table 3 below shows the AA scheme has no shortage of enquiries or applications from prospective volunteers.

Table 3. Number of enquiries and applications received per quarter.

	QTR 1	QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4	Total
<b>Enquiries</b>	56	61	61	105	<b>283</b>
<b>Applications</b>	18	18	11	21	<b>68</b>

All prospective volunteers selected for training following an initial interview are required to complete a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Form which is processed at an enhanced level and provide details of two people to contact for references. They are required to attend 2 units (Core Skills for Volunteers and the Role and Responsibilities of an AA) of SOVA’s preparatory training which forms a part of the selection process and have the opportunity to have portfolios of work accredited via the National Open College Network (NOCN).

Once volunteers have completed their training they can commence shadowing other volunteers or project staff when attending police stations. However, over the past couple of years, several volunteers have accompanied project staff on call-outs prior to completing the training and have commented on how that experience helped them to relate the practical to the theory and alleviate initial concerns about operating in the custody environment.

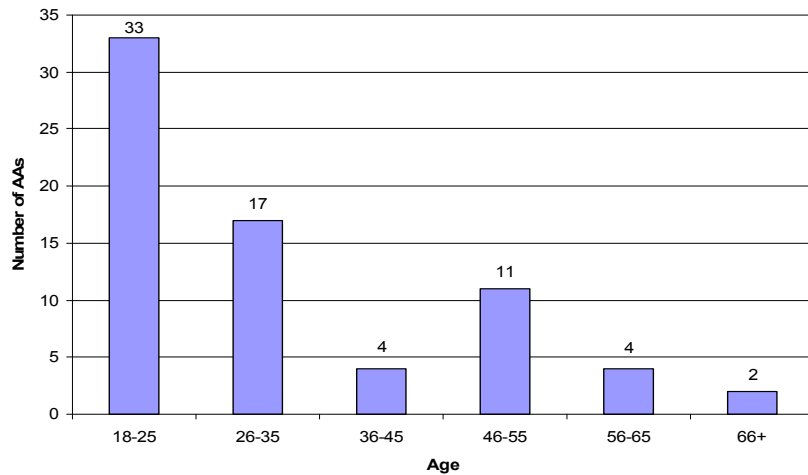
All volunteers have access to on-going support from project staff. Appropriate Adult staff are contactable by volunteers and custody staff at Ecclesfield Police Station (where the rota of volunteer availability is held) from 8am to 8pm, seven days per week. The timing of supervision for AAs is dependent on various factors such as the number of callouts undertaken/time since post-course interview/last supervision meeting or support group attended.

#### 4.2 Volunteers by Gender

Male = 17 Female = 54.

#### 4.3 Volunteers by Age

Fig 3



Volunteers from the younger age range were, as in previous years, over-represented, partly due to the number of full-time students attracted to the scheme to improve career prospects. The most common motivation amongst volunteers is to gain practical experience in working with young people and/or vulnerable adults in the fields of criminal/youth justice and social care.

#### 4.4 Volunteers by Ethnicity

- White British/Irish/Other = 64
- Asian/Asian British = 4
- Black = 3
- Volunteers with convictions = 3

#### 4.5 Hours

The amount of time given by volunteers is divided into two categories. ‘Direct Hours’ are the number of hours that volunteers are in attendance at a Police Station as an AA. ‘Indirect Hours’ includes, for example, the travel time to and from police stations, attendance at support group meetings, supervision and training.

Table 4

	Young People	V. Adults	Total
Direct Hours =	808	464	1272
Travel Time =	365	198	563
<b>Total</b>	<b>1173</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>1835</b>

Other indirect hours, i.e. in addition to travel time, is 1,362. The total number of hours is therefore 3,197. This data (direct hours + travel time (1835)) divided by the number of call-outs accepted minus those cancelled before the AA arrived (768) shows that each callout, on average, will take up almost 2hrs 30 minutes.

## 5 Beneficiaries

### 5.1 Beneficiaries by Gender

Table 5

Gender	Juveniles	V. Adults	Total
Male	449 (83%)	234 (89%)	<b>683 (85%)</b>
Female	91 (17%)	30 (11%)	<b>121 (15%)</b>

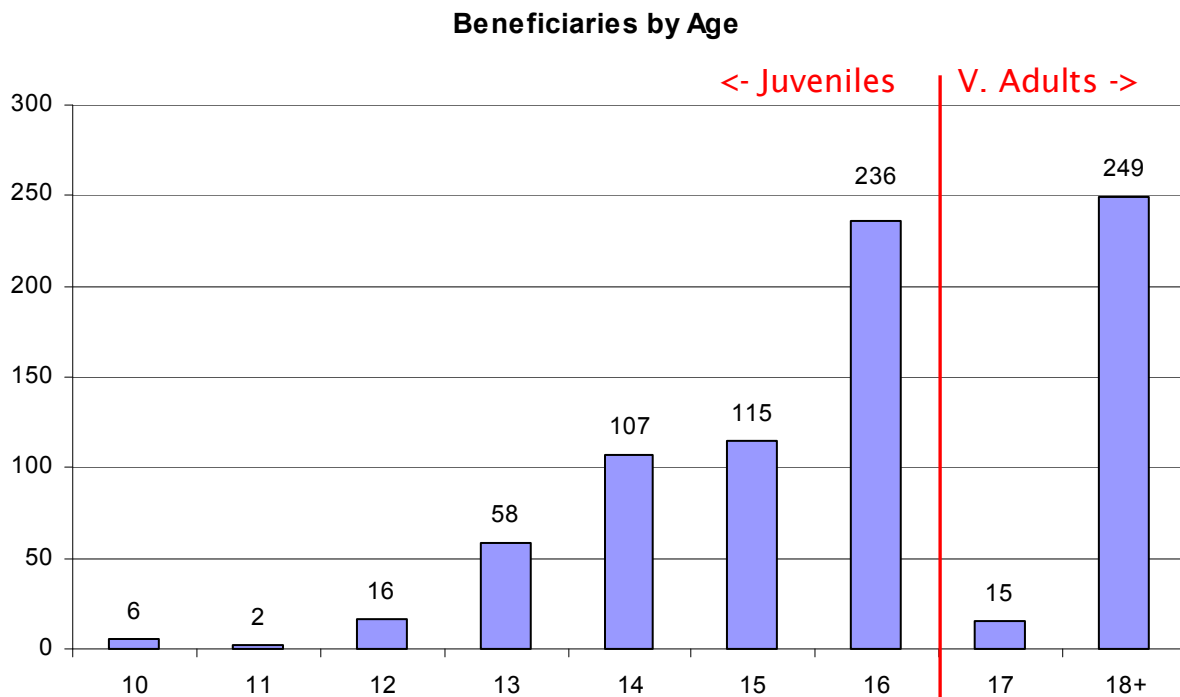
## 5.2 Beneficiaries by Ethnicity

Table 6

Ethnicity	Juveniles	V. Adults	Total
White (British, Irish, Other)	432	212	<b>644 (80%)</b>
Black or Black/British	57	32	<b>89 (11%)</b>
Asian or Asian/British	35	13	<b>48 (6%)</b>
Dual Heritage	6	0	<b>6 (1%)</b>
Chinese	0	0	<b>0</b>
Other / not known	10	7	<b>17 (2%)</b>
			<b>804</b>

## 5.3 Beneficiaries by Age

Fig 4



## 6 Project Development

Significant improvements have been made in administration and monitoring systems thanks to the additional support provided by the Mentoring Scheme's Administrative Assistant. This enabled project staff to devote more quality time to current volunteers, develop the training course content and improve the materials used. Improvements were also made in respect of the project's financial management following the move to pay volunteer expenses from a single budget rather than the established practice of paying some expenses from SOVA's budget and expenses for travel to/from police stations via Sheffield YOS budget.

The Project Manager and Support Officer attended the National Appropriate Adult Network (NAAN) conference in April 2009 and the former was successful in his application to join the NAAN Board in September. The project has block membership of the Yorkshire Association for Youth Justice (YAYJ), a Youth Justice practitioner lead

group that hold seminars and training events throughout the region. The Project Manager held the post of YAYJ Seminar Secretary for the past 12 months but other commitments have precluded continuation in this role.

## **7 Objectives and Targets for 2010 – 2011**

Not known at the time of writing.

## **8 Conclusion**

The AA scheme has again had a successful year and despite the decline in the number of requests being made for SOVA AAs in Sheffield, project staff remain very busy dealing with regular changes to volunteer availability, the unpredictable and fluctuating levels of demand for AAs and increasing levels of client and volunteer activity related monitoring and reporting requirements.

A marketing plan has been drafted in response to an identified need to recruit more males, people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and more people above the 18-25yrs age range. That is to say, we are committed to having a more diverse pool of volunteers in terms of age and ethnicity and one that is more representative of the local community.

Section 5 of this report shows the beneficiaries as being those who are supported by AAs but, it is important to note that an efficient and effective service also benefits the police force and the wider community. A high profile investigation in Sheffield involving two AAs over a three day period was featured in the Criminal Justice Management magazine in which Chief Inspector Dave Ambler stated:-

“ . . . their work had not only safeguarded the interests of the young people but had also provided a service to the public in allowing for the completion of a thorough and prompt enquiry.”

SOVA SYJP staff and volunteers are very grateful to the following people who have given their time to assist in the delivery of volunteer training and have willingly offered advice and guidance in their field of expertise. David Goddard, Community Psychiatric Nurse, of the Sheffield Court Diversion and Liaison Scheme, Andy Thompson, Sheffield YOS Senior Practice Teacher and Lecturer in Social Policy, Sociology and Psychology at Sheffield Hallam University and Mike Jones and Richard Jepson, defence lawyers, Grayson Willis and Bennett.

Thanks is also owed to Custody Suite staff at Ecclesfield Police Station who manage the rota of volunteer availability as supplied by Scheme staff and staff at Bridge Street Charge Office who give our newly recruited volunteer AAs an introduction to the Custody Suite environment via a guided tour, facilitated by a Custody Sergeant. Thanks also to Sheffield YOS Business Support Team who assist with administration.

The continued success and good reputation of the scheme is largely due to the dedication and commitment of our volunteers.