

# JUSTICE

MERSEYSIDE CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD NEWS

MERSEYSIDE  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

Criminal Justice System: working together for the public



SPRING 2009

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Inside  
Justice  
Week

Dates for your diary

Inside Justice Week 2009, 17th - 24th October.  
A week long of activity

Hosted by the Merseyside Criminal  
Justice Agencies where the public are  
able to see what goes on in the world of  
criminal justice.

## Merseyside Witness Care Unit – Serious Crime Team

The Merseyside Witness Care Unit expanded towards the end of 2008 which saw the creation of new Serious Crime Team. The Team supports witnesses affected by more serious crimes which have traditionally been dealt with by specialist police units.

The Serious Crime Team has now been up and running for a 4 month test period. During this initial four month period they have supported witnesses through trials that resulted in 10 defendants being sentenced to a total of 74 years in prison.

The team is currently caring for over 1,300 civilian witnesses in cases such as wounding,

# Celebrating 100 Years of Youth Courts

Merseyside Police, Her Majesty's Courts Service, Youth Offending Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, Magistracy and other supporting agencies all took part in the event. Special guests included the Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

Schools from across Merseyside were recently invited to the Youth Court in Liverpool to see how justice was done in Victorian times. This marks the 100th anniversary of Youth Courts which came in to effect across the UK following the passing of the Children Act 1908.

Pupils were taken back to 1909 to watch a mock sentencing dramatisation where a child in period costume was sentenced for stealing 2 bonnets. The stark contrast was clear for pupils when they were able to see a modern day court set up, showing how sentencing might

work today for stealing two DVDs. The event demonstrated how the law has changed from 100 years ago.

Geoffrey Appleton, Acting Area Director for Her Majesty's Courts Service (Cheshire & Merseyside) commented: 'Youth Court 100 in Merseyside offered a unique insight into Youth Justice over the last 100 years. The mock sentencing brought history to life as well as giving greater understanding of youth justice in today's world. The day was a fun and educational experience for children'.

attempted murder, serious sexual offences, death by dangerous driving, attempted arson, gun crime, serious fraud, grievous bodily harm and serious drug offences. Part of the tailored service for witnesses involves arranging special measures, help with childcare, transport, referrals to support agencies, as well as providing a service to both Police Officers and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Detective Sergeant Paul Bennett from St Helens CID has recently praised the work of the Witness Care Unit. DS Bennett was involved in a case that secured convictions for 8 defendants totalling 48 years imprisonment.

He said:  
'I used the Witness Care Unit for a serious assault trial. They provided me with a point of contact so I could manage my witness's needs and arrange special measures. The majority of the witnesses

were young people and they were dealt with in a professional manner throughout, by the Witness Care Officer'.

The Witness Care Officer has since been put forward for a local award for his professionalism in dealing with the witnesses in this case.

Merseyside Witness Care Unit is jointly staffed by Police and Crown Prosecution employees and is located in Liverpool city centre.



## About Victim Support

*Victim Support is the independent national charity for people affected by crime.*

Highly-trained staff and volunteers in the community give free and confidential help to victims of crime, their family, friends and other people affected by crime. This can be through information, emotional support and practical help. Victims don't have to report a crime to the police to get our help and can ask for support at any time, regardless of when the crime happened.

We have a network of offices right across England and Wales running and co-ordinating our local services. We also run the Witness Service in every criminal court to help those called as witnesses and our Victim Supportline (0845 30 30 900) gives immediate help over the phone and puts people in touch with our local teams. We are not a government agency or part of the police.

As well as providing services, we campaign for greater awareness of the effects of crime and to increase the rights of victims and witnesses.

## Volunteers

Most of our front-line work with victims and witnesses is done by trained volunteers, nationally we have around 6,500 people. In Merseyside we have 50 volunteers who have been through our volunteer training programme. The training is comprehensive and covers equality and diversity, the impact of crime, support skills and caring for young victims. Our new volunteers go through an accreditation process which involves shadowing an experienced volunteer. Further training is available for certain specialisms including the supporting of victims of serious crime.

The UK Government has been a major funder of Victim Support since 1987 but Victim Support remains an independent charity that is also dependent on

fundraising. The charity has had a long association with BBC's Crimewatch programme. Volunteers work special late shifts after every programme to answer calls from victims and other concerned viewers.

Our staff advise other organisations, including foreign governments, on how to set up and run effective helping services for victims of crime.

Young people are of growing importance to Victim Support. The charity has a number of youth projects around the country to help young people deal with crime and its effects. This includes a youth advisory panel in Norfolk.

## Our Goals

Victim Support redefined its goals in 2008. They are:

- **To be the national leader in providing or sourcing the best quality services for victims and witnesses.**
- **To be the national voice for victims and witnesses – a force for change.**

## How We Can Help Victims

Victim Support gives three main kinds of help to both victims and witnesses:

- **Emotional support – to help people deal with the personal effects of crime.**
- **Information – so that victims and witnesses can make better informed choices after a crime, particularly in relation to their rights and in their dealings with the criminal justice system.**
- **Practical help – which can range from help filling in forms and lock fitting services through to full advocacy where needed.**

Locally, a team of 12 staff operate our Victim Care Unit which is located in Bootle. The service is available from 8am to 8pm

Monday to Friday. We get most of our referrals from Merseyside Police, although some victims may approach us direct, particularly if they have not reported the crime. Initially we aim to contact victims by telephone, with up to three attempts at different times of the day. If this is not successful, we follow up with a letter.

## Changes in Recent Years

Victim Support was a federation of charities until 2008, when all the members across England and Wales merged to create a new, single national charity. Now that merger is complete, we have around 1,500 staff nationwide supporting over 6,500 volunteers who do most of the face-to-face work of helping victims and witnesses. We also have a brand new National Centre, set up specifically to manage and drive the new, restructured organisation.

Since 2007, we have created a greatly improved way of delivering services to victims. This project, known as Victim Support Plus, put in place a range of new benefits for our clients and the organisation itself, including:

- **A new standard needs assessment process.**
- **Improved follow-up; quicker turnaround times after police referral.**
- **Better performance management.**
- **Enhanced practical support (such as lock fitting) for those who need it.**

The changes have been good for Victim Support, we are now in a position to provide a more consistent and efficient service to victims of crime. All of our staff and volunteers are proud of the work we do.

Contact the Merseyside Victim Care Unit on **0151 353 4025** or email to [vcu.merseyside@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:vcu.merseyside@victimsupport.org.uk)

*Victim Support Merseyside, 2nd Floor Bridgewater Complex, Canal Street, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 8AH.*

## A Few Facts About Victim Support

- 1. Victim Support is the oldest and largest organisation dedicated to meeting the needs of victims and witnesses of crime in the world.**
- 2. Victim Support began in 1972 when a small, local project was set up in Bristol. It inspired people all over the UK, and worldwide, to create similar schemes.**
- 3. The name Victim Support, and variations on the 'sun and cloud' logo, are used as far afield as the Netherlands, Malta, Mauritius, Estonia and New Zealand.**
- 4. Since 1972, Victim Support has contacted and helped around 25 million people who have been victims or witnesses of crime.**
- 5. Each year we help and support over one and three quarter million people affected by crime.**
- 6. Victim Support started helping witnesses in court in 1989, thanks to a single, large donation from a member of the public. The Witness Service now operates in every criminal court in England and Wales.**

**7. HRH The Princess Royal has been a patron of Victim Support since 1989 and became the charity's President in 2001.**

**8. The Victim Supportline was launched in 1998 with the help of the Home Office, since then, it has taken well over 150,000 calls from victims of crime.**



# JUSTICE SEEN JUSTICE DONE

## COMMUNITY PAYBACK - WHAT IS IT?

It is a demanding punishment that can be handed out by the courts. Criminals could receive up to 300 hours unpaid work and could find themselves hacking back dense undergrowth, clearing rubbish or scrubbing graffiti from walls. While doing this work, offenders have to wear high-visibility jackets to make sure the public are aware of the work they are doing.

Offenders carry out over 6 million hours of Community Payback each year. If they were to be paid at the national minimum wage, this work would be valued at £34.5m and otherwise might not be done at all.

Local communities can now have their say in what work is carried out by criminals in their local area. With the delivery of tough Community Payback in local areas, the public can more than ever, see justice being done.

## COMMUNITY PAYBACK - WHAT'S HAPPENING IN LIVERPOOL?

The Liverpool public can now have a say in how criminals 'payback' by voting on which Community Payback project should be carried out as a punishment for criminals in their local area. This can be done on-line or over the telephone. 5 projects were identified in Liverpool as potential tasks for offenders:

- **Speke Hall Avenue, Speke**  
- a road in urgent need of a clean-up
- **The Westminster Estate, Kirkdale**  
- the revamping of an estate including removing fly-tipping and litter as well as scrubbing off graffiti
- **Lodge Lane, Toxteth**  
- a deep clean including litter, debris and graffiti removal
- **Middlemass Hey, Netherley**  
- cleaning up the area around shops and open spaces
- **Garmoyle Road and the Dales**  
- a much needed overhaul

Residents in Knowsley and St Helens have also had the opportunity to vote for the project that they want to be tackled first through Community Payback

Voting closed as we went to print with this article, but look out for the next edition of Justice when we'll be able to tell you which project was chosen by the public to be tackled first.

For more information on Community Payback and what is happening in your area of Merseyside, visit Merseyside Probation Trust's website  
[www.merseysideprobationtrust.org](http://www.merseysideprobationtrust.org)

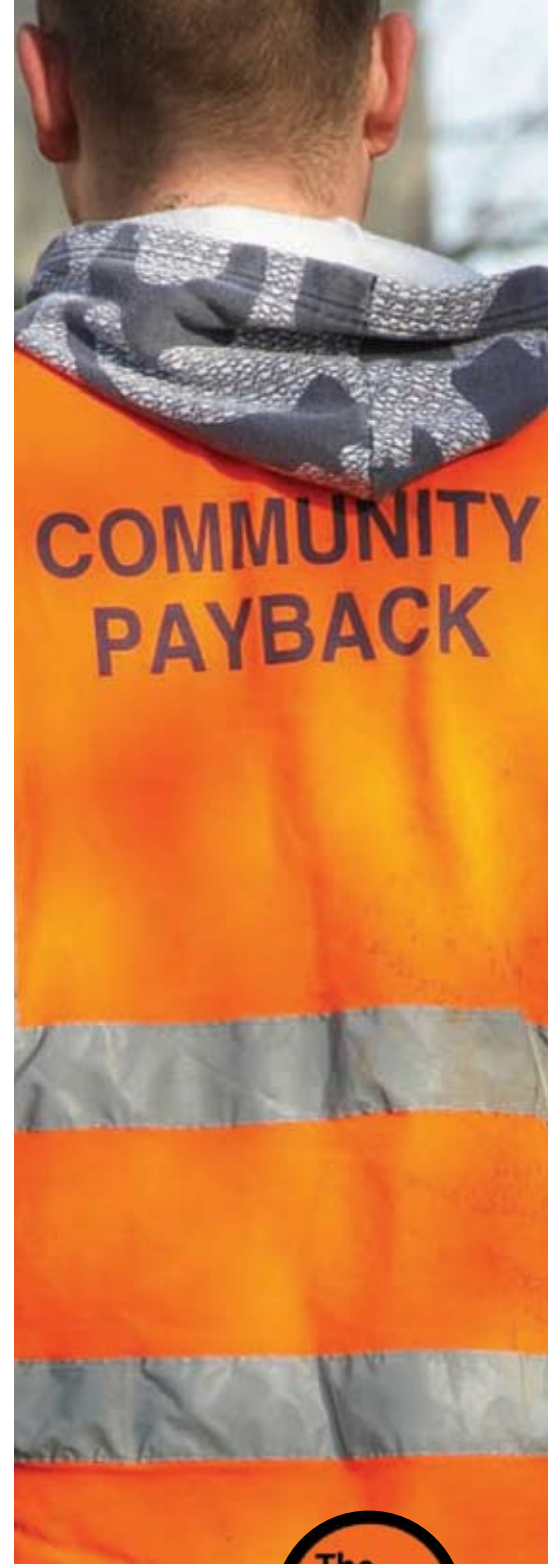
## COMMUNITY CRIME FIGHTERS COME TO TOWN

The first ever Liverpool Community Crime Fighters event took place on 22nd April at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Liverpool. Members of the public joined Merseyside Police, Liverpool City Council and partner agencies in finding out what local services are in place to help reduce crime and the fear of crime in communities.

The 'Community Crime Fighter Programme' was set up following a review done in 2008 by Louise Casey, Government Crime and Justice Advisor. The aim is to forge stronger links between the police, courts, local authority, probation and the communities they serve. Recent reforms to the police and criminal justice agencies have been designed to open up the system and increase public confidence in the police and criminal justice agencies. However, these changes have not always been communicated to the public so that it is clear to them what they can ask for, what they should expect, how to best help others or how to get involved, make a complaint or get things changed for the better, if they need to.

The Community Crime Fighters scheme will provide those who want to do and know more, with information and training on services they should expect – for example the new national Policing Pledge, as well as what they can do if they see problems. This will help them work with services to tackle crime and will also help filter information to others in the community.

Anyone interested in attending future similar events can register their interest by visiting [www.communitycrimefighters.org.uk](http://www.communitycrimefighters.org.uk) or by calling 0800 197 2965.



The  
Justice  
Awards

*Dates for your diary*  
Nominations open for the 2009 National Justice Awards on 14th May.

The Justice Awards campaign highlights, recognises and rewards staff and volunteers who work in the Criminal Justice System who 'go the extra mile'.

The deadline for submission is 14th July. Details on how to nominate will soon be available. Visit [www.justiceawards.cjsonline.gov.uk](http://www.justiceawards.cjsonline.gov.uk) for more information.

# Minority Group Community Events

Funded by Merseyside Criminal Justice Board a new series of events were recently designed to increase confidence in the criminal justice system.

Three events were aimed at the gypsy/traveller, Lesbian Gay and Bisexual (LGB), and Black and Racial Minorities (BRM) communities. Each event took the form of a dramatised hate crime trial and the audience were asked their opinions to help shape how the criminal justice system could make improvements in respect of tackling hate crime. The drama gave attendees an accurate representation of a trial based on real cases. Stop Hate UK (an independent charity organisation who have extensive experience in diversity issues) held a de-brief after each event, Stop Hate UK's findings will be presented to the Criminal Justice Board in the coming weeks.



# Saddle up for the Blue Lights Horse of the Year Show

Taking place in Merseyside in August and following on from the success of last year's inaugural event, Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service are once again staging a three-day competition to highlight equestrian talent in the emergency services.



This years event will take place between the 5 – 8th August at Aintree International Equestrian Centre, at Aintree Racecourse, home of the world famous Grand National.

The competition is open to all who are interested in competing in both novice and open competition level. Prizes will be awarded for:

- Police Horse of the Year
- Blue Lights' Horse of the Year
- Dressage Champion – Preliminary and Novice
- Show Jumping Champion in heights: 75/85/100cm
- Street Nuisance Champion



In 2008 Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service staged the Merseyside Police Equestrian Event incorporating National Police Horse of the Year Show in association with World Firefighters Games.

The event attracted around 5,000 spectators who watched 100 horses and 40 competitors from the Police and Fire Service competing in dressage, jumping and 'Street police nuisance lanes'.

The programme also included dramatic displays and competitions provided by members of the Pony Club and Riding for the Disabled. The event raised £6,000 for Riding for the Disabled. Chief Constable of Merseyside Police, Bernard Hogan Howe said: "Last year's event was a huge success and we are really looking forward to

putting on a bigger and better show in 2009. Police horses play a vital role in modern day policing performing street patrol in support of neighbourhood policing teams. This is a great celebration of Police horses and we welcome the inclusion of other emergency services to the event."

Chief Fire Officer of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Tony McGuirk said: "We were delighted by the success of last year's event. It was the first time an equestrian event has been part of the World Firefighters Games and feedback was so positive from competitors and spectators that we were keen to build on its success. We hope everybody enjoys the 2009 show which is set to be the biggest emergency service equine event ever."

An announcement will be made when tickets for the event are available, in the meantime we're also offering readers the chance to come along and enjoy the action with a chance to win a family ticket to watch the final show day on Saturday 8th August at Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool. To enter, answer the following question:

**Where will the Blue Lights Horse of the Year Show 2009 take place?**

Email your answer and contact details to [registration@bluelights.org.uk](mailto:registration@bluelights.org.uk). The winner will be notified in June 2009.

To find out more about the competition or register your entry visit: [www.bluelighthorseoftheyearshow.co.uk](http://www.bluelighthorseoftheyearshow.co.uk) Entry closing date is 30 April 2009.



Potential features and ideas are welcome. Contact the Editor, **Carol Davenport** by email: [carol.davenport@merseyside.pnn.police.uk](mailto:carol.davenport@merseyside.pnn.police.uk)