

Staff Profile Tony Quinn (Victim Liaison Officer)



What's your background?

I was born and grew up in Birmingham. I came to York St John's 1976 and studied a BA (Hons) in English Literature. I later qualified as a teacher at Liverpool but Joined North Yorkshire Police instead in 1982. I served 30 years in the Police, my career was divided fairly equally between uniform and CID duties. I retired in 2012 as an Inspector and was fortunate enough to be awarded the NYP Lifetime Achievement award for that year. After leaving the Police I worked at a Secondary School in Scarborough as a Pastoral Support Officer. I enjoyed the role very much but as with my other skirmishes with teaching it wasn't to last. I saw the advert for the Victim Liaison Officer Post with the YJS and thought it was an ideal match for my experience and skills.

How long have you been working for the Youth Justice Service?

Since November 2013

What motivates you about your role?

Providing victims with the information and support they require but also feeding back their views so that young people are aware of the full impact of their actions. This often includes victims expressing understanding and support for the young person. Victims are rarely disparaging towards young people which is not what you might expect if you accepted the views sometimes portrayed in the media.

Thinking back to your first day with the YJS how have you adapted and changed?

Despite my previous experience there was still a lot I had to learn and I have definitely improved the service I provide since I began. I have sought to get out and meet people personally more than I did initially and have sought to develop our use of Restorative Justice.

What advice would you give to someone seeking the same career?

For me Youth Justice work has the same attraction that Policing has. It is a career where you can do good by helping others. If we can help young people to turn away from offending we are not only helping them we are also reducing the number of future victims. At its core the role is about people and for it to be done well it requires effective communication skills. If you have those skills and care about people then it is a great job.

What challenges do you face in your role?

Some victims wish to move on and forget the whole experience; others are still living it and have a wide range of on-going needs which can include protection and access to services such as counselling and mediation. What is satisfying is that even those who wish to move on without support from me are usually willing to provide details of the impact the crime has had upon them and their families, so my colleagues can use it as part of the victim awareness work they do with young people.

What is your proudest moment?

I worked with a family on a particularly sensitive case and after one of the sessions said to the one victim “thank you for trusting me to help you and your family.” She replied “No thank you, you are very easy to trust.” I thought it was a very nice thing for her to say.

Would you change anything?

I am trying to get more professionals who become victims to get involved in Restorative Justice. Some in Policing, Education and Social Care simply accept that being a victim sometimes comes with the role and wish to move on. I think there is an opportunity for both sides to talk about their feelings and to explore how the situation arose in the hope that they can both understand each other better and reduce the risk of the same thing happening again.

What's an average day like?

It's a mixture. There is usually some computer or paperwork such as writing up reports of visits and preparing letters. The rest of my time involves contacting and visiting victims who can live anywhere across the east of the county from Selby to Whitby and Ryedale. I work in an office with case workers and other professionals so there is also the opportunity to discuss cases.