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“Systematically and rigorously finding out what people want and need from their services is a fundamental duty of both the commissioners and the providers of services. It is particularly important to reach out to those whose needs are greatest but whose voices are often least heard.”

Department of Health (2006), *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*

There is increasingly widespread recognition that involving service users in the design, delivery and review of services can bring unique insights, leading to **better service outcomes and improved implementation of change**. Meanwhile it can also have a positive impact on the individuals involved by boosting their confidence and skills. This is something the offender personality disorder programme has long recognised, and we have a dedicated service user involvement strategy that guides the way we put the principle of meaningful offender engagement into practice. This seventh edition of the *Pathway Press* focuses on activities underway around the pathway that aim to engage offenders in a positive way, and describes the benefits this has brought. Throughout the edition, we have included artwork and written contributions from offenders, including an extended short story by John, inspired by his experience of participating in the PIPE Reader Organisation project. We hope you find it an inspiring read!

What is the offender personality disorder service user involvement strategy?

The aim of the strategy is to increase service users' active participation and engagement by enabling activities that support their personal empowerment and individual responsibility, as well as facilitating their involvement in the design, delivery and review of service provision. The benefits of this engagement will help staff and offenders to build up a positive working relationship; reduce offenders' resistance to progression and challenge to the environment; and provide a mechanism for monitoring and improving service provision. Importantly it will also **encourage offenders in developing a more pro-social way of living their lives** both in prison and in the community; and support them in better managing the stigma and difficulties of their personality disorder. Here are some examples of programme-level service user involvement we've undertaken to date:

- We commissioned the Prison Radio Association to run a series of workshops in PIPE sites (see *Pathway Press* edition 6 for a full report)
- We regularly undertake 'listening visits' to pathway sites, the findings of which feed in to co-commissioners' performance management of services (see p.2 for more!)
- We commissioned the participatory arts organisation TiPP to deliver a project at the Resettle service in Merseyside, which explored what it is like to live with a diagnosis of personality disorder through the production of a film and booklet
- We've set up a virtual expert group to help guide strategy implementation
- We commissioned Emergence to undertake service user consultations across the women's pathway to inform our gender-specific approach
- We're working on two books that showcase contributions from offenders throughout the pathway – the first is a collection of honest and thought-provoking written experiences from prisoners with a diagnosis of personality disorder; and the second is a collection of recipes. The poem from Jodie, recipe from Amanda and thoughts from Michael, which feature in this edition, are extracts from the forthcoming books.



Latest programme news

As many readers will be aware, several business cases which were prepared in early 2014 are still awaiting financial approval. Please be assured that we continue to seek an urgent resolution and are grateful to all who are affected by these delays for your continued patience.

In recent months, we have concluded the following procurement exercises:

- Greater Manchester West NHS Foundation Trust was selected to work alongside HMP & YOI **New Hall** to deliver a new PD treatment service for women – this will go live in October 2014
- Together Women Project was selected as the provider for **mentoring and advocacy services for women** offenders meeting the pathway entry criteria in the North of England and North Wales – this went live in July 2014
- Kings College London was selected as the provider for the **evaluation of the national pathway**. The evaluation started in August and includes a process study, impact study and economic evaluation
- NatCen was selected as the provider for an **evaluation of prison Democratic Therapeutic Communities**. This will also consider how reoffending and health outcomes can be evaluated for indeterminate sentenced prisoners, and so will have wider benefit for pathway research and evaluation.

The following services have gone live:

- **New PIPEs** at HMP Wymott, HMP&YOI Warren Hill and Crowley House Approved Premises; and a new treatment service and PIPE at HMP **Wayland**
- **CARE** (Choices, Actions, Relationships, Emotions) accredited offending behaviour programme for women, which we are co-funding with NOMS Custodial Commissioners at HMP&YOI New Hall.

We have also:

- Been busy organising a two day workshop, planned for 23rd and 24th September on our new **Framework for Case Formulation**. The event is aimed at all practitioners working in the pathway who are involved in delivering case formulation
- Started working with a group of leading academics who will bid for up to £2.5m competitive **National Institute of Health Research applied research funding** to investigate key aspects of the pathway relating to risk, readiness to engage, case formulation and motivation

- Commenced a field test to ensure **data collection practices** are fit for purpose
- Developed a **Framework document** and **Brochure** of Offender Personality Disorder Services. The Framework gives an overview of the pathway, while the Brochure includes detailed information about each service. Both are available on Kahootz (our collaboration tool for the pathway) or on request from pd@noms.gsi.gov.uk.

And finally, a number of events and networks have taken place:

- We hosted a learning and consultation event in June 2014 for all providers of the **community specification**
- The **South and London regions** have held **network meetings** (Clinical Network, learning and development group and a Secure Services group) which aim to support the flow of complex cases within the pathway and identify issues around development to assist in progression
- The first meeting of the new **women offender personality disorder pathway network** took place in May 2014, bringing together clinical and operational leads of services involved in the women's pathway.

*What do you do when all is bad,
think of things you could of had?*

*What do you do when things get rough,
do things you did when things got tough?*

*What do you do when life hits hard,
back down and put up your quard?*

*What would you do if you got hurt, found
it difficult or got in a state,
curse all the people you hate?*

*What would you do if you stumbled, had
given up or lost,
sit back and watched your world as it
crumbled?*

*What happens when you're at your lowest to
the point you want it to end,
call upon your closest friend?*

*What happens if you get stuck on your way,
continue to avoid each day?*

*Think about all things good,
do things that you think you should.
Think of all the times you've had, when
things have got really bad.
Think of the things that kept you strong
and hopefully this should help you along.*

Jodie, HMP Foston Hall

A definition of service user involvement

“A process by which people are able to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them; in making decisions about factors that affect their lives; in formulating and implementing policies; in planning, developing and delivering services, and in taking action to achieve change.”

World Health Organisation, 2002

We listened, offenders said...

Over the past two years, the offender personality disorder programme team has undertaken numerous visits to pathway services and spoken to over 100 offenders as part of our Listening Programme. Here are some of the key findings:

- Staffing and how staff relate to individuals was a top priority for participants in the Listening sessions. The relationship needed to be strong, open and honest and **have a level of trust on both sides**. Staff attitude was another top priority highlighted, as was staff having more time to work with and engage individuals
- It was apparent that **staff resilience and perseverance** with individuals even when they fail and breakdown was another factor in maintaining a good relationship with the men and women
- Individuals had different reasons why and how they stayed motivated: for some this was connected to personal goals and a desire to succeed, but the **main motivator for participants we spoke to was family**
- The majority of participants cited, ‘living a normal life’ as their hope for the future; along with gaining employment, having their own accommodation and **leading a crime free life**
- The vast majority of offenders were used to being consulted, whether this was around food or outings, or wider service provision. However there was a level of pessimism as to whether anything would change
- Offenders wanted a better understanding and dialogue with staff as to **what progression meant for them as individuals** as everyone’s circumstances were different.



Art and cookery activities at FPTS

Community integration through engagement at FPTS

The Forensic Psychological Therapies Service (FPTS) at Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provides a range of psychological assessment and treatment services for men and women living in the community who have longstanding emotional and behavioural problems. Here, **Cara Thompson and Lauren Smith, Assistant Psychologists at the Trust**, tell us more about how the Service has introduced a range of service user engagement activities as a way of assisting people who are engaged in or have completed therapy to put into practice what they’ve learned, and become more integrated into their communities.

“We are committed to supporting our service users – during and after treatment – in rebuilding their lives in the community. The projects aim to assist users and former users to pursue their interests, build a social network, develop new skills and gradually **find a new, ‘non-offender’ identity**. These aims are based on research into the factors that assist people to stop offending and live safer and more satisfying lives.

“For example, in partnership with Sova Support Link and The Bridge Café UK, we use a café setting on a weekly basis for current and ex-service users to meet, participate and lead on activities. This includes running a cookery group, where meals are prepared and eaten together. Whilst the cooking takes place, another activity runs consecutively, such as art, a food safety course or papier-mâché. We are continuously looking for different activities to run at the café, **led by service users’ needs and interests**.

“Our other service user led projects within FPTS include an Art group, members of which have recently held two exhibitions; a gardening group; website development for an on-line presence; and a film club planned for later this year. We also hold monthly steering group meetings for a variety of projects whereby service users and professionals work collaboratively on the planning and delivery of activities and training.

“Our NHS Trust is the lead partner in London Pathways Partnership (LPP), the health provider delivering the offender personality disorder strategy in London, in partnership with probation and prison services. Our users are currently working with LPP in planning a number of user-led projects across London, including peer mentoring, group co-facilitation and service evaluation. We expect that collaboration between users and professionals will, in time, enable a robust network of opportunities and support to develop, which individual men and women can access in a wide range of ways depending on their wishes and needs.”

The Westgate Service: 10 years of service user involvement learning

Congratulations to the Westgate Service at HMP Frankland, which recently celebrated its ten year anniversary! Based on a decade of service user engagement experience, we asked the Westgate team to share examples of how they ensure that participating prisoners have the chance to shape the service. And here's what they told us...



Empowerment through involvement

"In preparing the portfolio for the Enabling Environment (EE) award on the PIPE [operational since 2012 as a progression option following Westgate or other treatment], we arranged a number of group sessions in which each of the ten EE standards was discussed, and prisoners provided feedback and suggestions on how we could evidence these standards. Many prisoners also completed work outside of these sessions, providing reflections on their experience of being on Westgate; their interactions with other prisoners, staff, and outside agencies; and projects they had been involved in, e.g. arranging a staff and prisoner football match. Prisoners not involved in these group sessions also had the opportunity to contribute.

"We received many accounts of how supported prisoners felt by different members of staff, and how being asked for their contributions made them **feel empowered and involved**. A number of prisoners also described specific problems they had overcome or changes they had been able to make whilst being on the unit."

Karen Shotton, PIPE Clinical Lead

Consulting on service changes

"All men on the unit were invited to focus group discussions on what would be beneficial purposeful activities for the unit. The contributions from men in the sessions have been pivotal in the decision making process, along with suggestions from staff on the unit who are also eager to be involved. Despite being in their infancy, the focus groups have resulted in the introduction of cookery, Reader project and a discussion group."

Carla Gallagher, Psychologist/Support Services Lead

Co-design of new systems

"The previously named Good Lives and Development (GLAD) system has been under review recently. Prisoners were invited to attend focus groups facilitated by multidisciplinary staff. They were asked what sort of system would help them set and achieve realistic goals. Their priorities for the new system were that it be:

- Voluntary; motivational; individualised

- Prisoner-led but collaboratively supported by uniformed and clinical staff
- Informed by treatment but applied in all aspects of the regime.

"The system is currently in development as a result of this feedback. In terms of prisoner involvement going forward, we intend to involve prisoners in renaming the scheme, designing the prisoner booklet and piloting the scheme prior to a finalised system being rolled out."

Alice Bennett, Forensic Psychologist in Training

Involvement in service development

"We wanted to ensure that prisoners' views were included in the development work around therapeutic groups delivered on the unit. Two direct changes were made in response to prisoners' suggestions: we added two more individual sessions to the Emotion Modulation group after prisoners said they needed increased facilitator support; and we also removed two sessions from the Active Learning group following feedback that these sessions were neither beneficial nor enjoyable."

Naomi Rablen, Forensic Psychologist in Training

Engagement doesn't stop when prisoners move on

"Westgate graduates were contacted and asked about their experience of Westgate treatment and their progression since moving on. Our aim was not only to encourage the engagement of other prisoners in treatment, but also to **motivate staff and reinforce the meaningful impact they have on those residing on the unit**. Current Westgate residents presented the letters received, and prepared and delivered the 'Stages of progression from a Graduate's perspective' at the Ten Year Celebration event."

Amanda Luke, acting Progression Lead



**"The Calm," by Lee
Resident of Kirk Lodge Approved Premises PIPE**

"I did this in oil pastels and used my imagination. I liked the freedom of the sea, the calm after the storm, the sway of the sea driving into the rocks. It's life, isn't it?"

Collaboration with Emergence

To support our aim of meaningful service user involvement, the offender personality disorder programme often draws on the specialist knowledge and resources of the service user-led organisation, Emergence. Here, **Kath Lovell, Managing Director of Emergence**, reflects on half a decade of involvement in the offender personality disorder pathway and how the relationship has brought mutual benefits.

“Our tagline at Emergence is ‘Changing Attitudes – Building Lives’ and since our launch in 2009 our work with the Department of Health, NHS England, NOMS and the Offender Personality Disorder Programme Team has certainly helped us put that tagline into reality. A member of our team eloquently sums it up:

“In so many ways our work across the offender pathway is inspirational; it allows the possibility of staff being able to make sense of an individual’s past but more importantly see that individual’s potential... it allows staff to explore and connect with the idea that there is an individual who needs help behind the term, ‘offender’.”

“Many will know of our involvement with the development and subsequent delivery of the Knowledge & Understanding Framework (KUF) workforce development programme with our partners, the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), the Tavistock and Portman Clinic and the Open University. **The success of KUF is truly an amazing achievement**, and is demonstrated in many guises. For example, we regularly receive feedback from KUF participants who describe how they now feel able to work more effectively with individuals with personality disorder. But for many, the defining part of their experience has been the co-facilitation of the training by Emergence trainers with a lived experience of personality disorder. Through the power of role modelling, the **Emergence trainers act as beacons of hope**, often bringing to the fore the humanity of those they represent, those who because of circumstance and experience, have lived lives suffused in darkness, pain and distress.

“The KUF has done much to change attitudes about personality disorder, but additionally many lives have subsequently been built through the **development of a range of employment opportunities** for a set of individuals who have traditionally been excluded.

“We were recently pleased to co-develop, with IMH, newer KUF products, such as the gender-specific awareness packages (known collectively as W-KUF). What is perhaps not known to many is that the development of the W-KUF products is greatly informed by a consultation project that Emergence was commissioned to undertake by

NOMS and NHS England involving HMP Foston Hall, HMP Drake Hall and Crowley House Approved Premises. Although the bulk of this consultation was focused on the development of complex needs/personality disorder services for women offenders in the Midlands, this consultation greatly informed the content of W-KUF. This connection between the two pieces of work ensured that the **new products were tailored more precisely to the needs of staff** working with women across the pathway, but more importantly, ensured that the trauma and very difficult life experiences of women in these types of services would be understood and thought about empathically by staff who worked with them.

“Whilst the KUF is a significant part of the relationship between Emergence and the offender personality disorder pathway, its sheer scale could easily overshadow our other pieces of work. The consultation project that we undertook in the Midlands has now been extended to other prisons on the women offender personality disorder pathway, and very recently Emergence bid for and won a contract with HMYOI Aylesbury to develop service user involvement within their new complex needs service. These projects are incredibly important to Emergence, with each piece of work greatly informing another.

“No matter how big or small a project might be to deliver, the impact will always be significant, not just for those directly involved in that project but to the wider population affected by personality disorder as **we go on to change more attitudes and build more lives.**”

Emergence supports all people affected by personality disorder, including service users, carers, family and friends and professionals. For more information about Emergence, please see their website: www.emergenceplus.org.uk.

Thoughts regards therapy:

I've been made to think a lot about aspects of my life, my behaviour and personality. More importantly to take the observations on board and not to see them as criticisms, which I did at first. Some clinicians have different working styles which can make life difficult if you feel criticised. Others will help by speaking with you on a level and honestly, and give you the time and space to grow, to make mistakes and to help you though them.

Thoughts regards risk/coping:

More able to look at the whole situation and not be guided by anger, ego or pride. Beginning to understand me a lot more and the emotions that underpin a lot of the violence in my life and why I perhaps react in that way. Understanding the emotion is for me the most important thing right now as I never realised how big a part it played in my offending.

Thoughts on what's worked best so far:

Support, people who hear and listen to me in my worst moments, who try to help and come back the next day with similar intent.

Michael, HMP Whitemoor

A recipe for Egg Custard Tart

**Amanda, former resident of Crowley House
Approved Premises PIPE, Birmingham**

“Since committing my offence and battling alcoholism, making my egg custards gave me a sense of achievement and self worth and help me gain a qualification in catering. I enjoyed the process of learning and I was finally recognised for doing something great.”

Ingredients

<i>For the pastry:</i>	<i>For the egg custard filling:</i>
½ egg	3 eggs
25g sugar	½ pint of milk
60g margarine	50g sugar
100g flour	Grated nutmeg
Pinch of salt	

Method

To make the pastry:

1. Cream egg and sugar lightly
2. Add margarine
3. Add flour and salt, and mix lightly until a smooth dough is achieved
4. Allow to rest before blind baking.

To make the egg custard filling:

1. Bring milk and sugar to the boil
2. Pour on beaten eggs
3. Strain custard mixture into blind baked pastry case, sprinkle on nutmeg and bake at 180°C
4. Chill for 20 minutes until set.



Good News column

We're pleased to introduce a new, regular feature of the *Pathway Press* – a chance to celebrate successes from around the pathway. If you have a Good News story to share for a future edition, please email pd@noms.gsi.gov.uk.

Professor Livesley visits The Beacon

The Emeritus Professor John Livesley visited The Beacon at HMP Garth in March after it officially opened on 4th February 2014. Professor Livesley's (2012) integrated treatment model for personality disorder is one of the key elements of treatment on The Beacon. Its use helps The Beacon to establish and maintain collaborative treatment alliances between staff and offenders, as well as building men's motivation for change and promoting self-reflection. Professor Livesley provided training on the model to the key staff team, which is made up of both NHS clinical staff and prison officers. We had the opportunity to reflect upon the importance of staff and prisoner interactions, which is at the heart of facilitating change. Professor Livesley also conducted a question and answer session with the prisoners who had the opportunity to discuss their experiences so far, which stimulated a lively debate. In the photograph you can see members of the team with Professor Livesley, in front of The Beacon sign proudly made by the prisoners!
Colin Scott (Custodial Manager, The Beacon)

Primrose introduces FIP-MO

The Primrose Service based at HMP & YOI Low Newton will soon be introducing the *Fire-setting Intervention for Mentally Disordered Offenders* (FIP-MO; Gannon & Lockerbie, 2011). This is an extremely exciting development as this is the first time FIP-MO will be undertaken in a female prison establishment. FIP-MO is currently being implemented and evaluated as part of a multi-site research project within secure forensic mental health services, with positive preliminary results. FIP-MO has been structured to focus on primary treatment needs for fire-setting, including fire interest, fire safety awareness and self-regulation. It adopts a 'Good Lives' approach to treatment and aims to help participants develop emotional management skills and interpersonal effectiveness. The intervention also encourages participants to understand their offending patterns as well as links between mental health and offending to help reduce risk of fire-setting.

*Nichola Tyler (Research Associate, University of Kent)
& Annette McKeown (Psychologist, Primrose Service)*

Over to you: *Pathway Press* brings you the latest offender personality disorder programme updates, stories from our pathway services and wider personality disorder developments. Previous editions are available on Kahootz, or to NOMS colleagues [here](#). Our next edition (December 2014) will focus on research and evaluation. If you have a story to share, please email pd@noms.gsi.gov.uk.

“The Path Not Trod”

John, HMP Frankland Progression PIPE

The poem ‘Kindness’ by Naomi Shihab Nye was being read aloud, during a session with the Reader Organisation, when my mind was cast back to events that had taken place so long ago that I would have sworn they had been erased from my memory. But recollection of kind acts, like good poetry, are retained in the back of one’s mind and are ready to be recalled at any given moment. This was one such occasion.

Being whisked back through time was like an out-of-body-experience, as I seemed to hover in mid-air, whilst looking down on events as they unfolded beneath me, and all the while lines of the poem flitted in and out of various scenes to act as cue cards in this ghost-like daydream...

I saw a frightened young boy walking along a country lane that led towards the picturesque village of Brockweir. In his right-hand he carried a club-like piece of wood, which he swore he would use to bash anyone who came near him; for the boy was an absconder from the nearby Approved School and during the night he had been scared out of his wits’ end.

*“Before you know what kindness really is you must
lose things,
Feel the future dissolve in a moment like salt in a
weakened broth.”*

The opening lines of the poem ‘Kindness’ describe exactly how the boy felt as the magistrate imposed an Approved School Order upon him, for a petty crime of which he was totally innocent.

*“What you held in your hand, what you counted and
carefully saved,
All this must go so you know how desolate the landscape
can be,
Between the regions of kindness.”*

But for the frightened young boy, walking along the leafy country lane that day, the regions of kindness were desert lands, for he had yet to encounter an oasis of kindness during his young life.

*“Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
You must travel where the Indian, in a white poncho,
Lies dead by the side of the road,
You must see how this could be you,
How he too was someone who journeyed through the night,
With plans and the simple breath that kept him alive.”*

The dewy haze that hung on late into the morning had now lifted and birds twittered in the hedgerow and treetops bordering each side of the narrow lane. Behind him the boy heard the soft-purring sound of a motor vehicle’s engine and he glanced over his right shoulder to see a russet-brown van slowly approaching.

Emblazoned above the driver’s cab was a slogan that read: ‘Brockweir Bakers Ltd’ and the boy, not sensing any danger, pressed himself tightly into the foliage of the hedgerow to give the van more room to pass. Inching its way past him the van continued down the lane some thirty or forty yards before coming to a halt. The boy thought that

perhaps the driver had stopped to offer him a lift and so he carried on walking down the lane towards the parked baker’s van. He was about twenty-feet from the back of the van when, suddenly, the rear doors were flung open and out leapt an agile police officer. The boy was so startled that he almost froze to the spot and instinctively raised the heavy lump of wood in his hand, “Don’t come near me or I will whack you one!”

“Boy,” growled the policeman, “I promise you that if you hit me with that stick, I will give you the finest hiding you have ever had in your life, and you had better believe it.” In one fluid-movement the boy dropped the stick and turning on his heels he ran off down the rutted lane. This was a futile gesture on the boy’s part as the police officer was as swift as an antelope and within a few strides had caught up with him. Seizing him by the scruff of his neck, the policeman dragged the struggling boy to the van and unceremoniously bundled him inside before slapping a pair of handcuffs on him, “Now!” ordered the police officer, “Behave yourself or else.”

The van trundled over the humpbacked bridge, spanning the river Wye, and after a short drive pulled up outside a detached house with a blue orb above the front door.

*“Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
You must know sorrow as the other deepest thing,
You must wake up with sorrow,
You must speak to it till your voice
Catches the thread of all sorrows,
And you see the size of the cloth.”*

Dragged along by the handcuffs, attached to his wrists, the boy struggled but was eventually forced into the hallway of the policeman’s house.

“Glen,” a voice admonished, “What have I told you about bringing prisoners into the house?”

Losing his composure, briefly, the policeman replied, “I didn’t have a choice this time. I am going to have to wait until Chepstow send transport for him.”

There was a sharp intake of breath before the voice continued, “Oh! Glen, he’s only a boy. Take those handcuffs off him.”

Spluttering, in rage, the policeman managed to rasp out, “This boy, as you call him, just tried to bash my brains out with a stick.”

A few seconds of silence ensued before the good lady of the house asked, “Would you really have hit my husband with a stick?”

“No, Mam, I – I – I was only trying to scare him so that he wouldn’t grab hold of me,” said the boy, sheepishly. By now all the fight had gone out of him and the lady’s voice was starting to have a calming effect on him.

“Well,” said the lady, speaking softly, “my name is missus Morgan, and what is your name?”

“My name is John Hays, Mam,” the boy politely replied.

“Well, John,” missus Morgan continued, “If I were to get my husband to take off those handcuffs, would you promise not to run away?”

"Yes missus Morgan, I promise."

"And do you also promise to behave while you are in my house?"

"Yes missus Morgan, I promise to behave myself."

A look of resignation came over the police officer's face and nothing more was said as he began unlocking the handcuffs. Missus Morgan gave the boy a stern look before saying, "So, John, you can go in the living room and play on the carpet with my two children. I am sure they will like you and that you'll soon become friends."

Upon entering the neatly kept living room the boy was greeted by two children playing with a toy garage and grocery store. Strewn about on the carpet were various dinky cars, lorries and other vehicles.

"Hello," a boyish voice spoke, "my name is Wayne and this is my sister Jenny."

"Hello," said Jenny, "we are pleased to meet you."

"Hi," the boy replied, "my name is John and I am very pleased to meet both of you."

Then, like long lost friends greeting each other, they shook hands and Jenny asked, "Would you like to come and play with us, John? We need somebody to be the manager of the garage. I run the grocery store and Wayne looks after the petrol pumps."

"It'll be fun, if you say yes," Wayne added.

Suddenly, all of John's troubles seemed to melt into thin air and he joined in the game that Wayne and Jenny were playing. Sometime later, Glen, the police officer, came into the living room and spoke in a firm but gentle voice, "John, I have to go out for a short while. Will you be all right staying here until I get back?"

"Yes, Mister Morgan," John readily replied.

After Glen left the house missus Morgan came into the living room, "Right kids, I want you both to put away your toys and start getting ready for Sunday school. John will you come and sit in the kitchen while I make sandwiches and hot drinks?" John followed missus Morgan into the kitchen and she beckoned him to sit at the dining table as she began busying herself making snacks. "So, John, tell me why you are at Sedbury Park School?"

"Well, missus Morgan, they say I stole a pocket watch by finding. But I never found a pocket watch and I didn't steal one."

"So is that why you keep running away?"

"Yes, missus Morgan. It's just that I don't think it's fair that I have to stay there for something I didn't do."

"But do you not see that by running away you are only harming yourself, John?"

"It's just not fair, missus Morgan."

"Now John I want you to listen very carefully to what I have to say. So far, life has not been very good to you and I do understand how you feel. But life is not always fair because there is good and bad luck and each of us has to take our

share of both when they come along. Just because you've had bad luck doesn't mean you can do bad things, which only makes your bad luck worse. If you don't stop running away you are just going to get yourself into more trouble. My husband and I, we would both like to try and help you, but only if you start behaving yourself and stop running away. Then, you could come and visit us whenever you wanted to. Would you like that John?"

"Yes please, missus Morgan, I would like that very much."

"Well, John, I want you to think very carefully about what we have been talking about. Right now I don't want you to make any promises. What I would like you to do is to go back to Sedbury Park and stay there. Then, in a couple of months, once you show you are behaving yourself, you could then start visiting us. The choice is yours, John."

Wayne and Jenny came into the kitchen and took their places at the dining table. Then they all sat down together, like a family, and ate brunch. Little did John know, as he sat at the dining table late that Sunday morning, that it would be another five years before he would again taste a slice of family life.

Not long after Wayne and Jenny left for Sunday school, Mister Morgan returned to the house and said, "Right, John, it's time to leave. I have to take you to Chepstow Police Station." John was crestfallen as he had never been treated with such kindness before and now he had to leave it all behind. He thanked missus Morgan for looking after him, and as he walked down the front garden path she called out, "Now, John, remember what I told you and come back to visit us soon. The children will always be pleased to see you again."

*"Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
Only kindness that raised its head,
From the crowd of the world to say,
It is I you have been looking for,
And then goes with you everywhere,
Like a shadow or a friend."*

As the last lines of the poem faded into silence, John's thoughts came back to the present and later he pondered on what may have been the outcome had he but returned to missus Morgan's house; the question which kept coming back to haunt him was, would her kindness and guidance have steered his life in a different direction to the one it eventually took? The answer would forever elude him, for having never taken up missus Morgan's kind offer it would always remain the path not trod.

With acknowledgement to Naomi Shihab Nye

Please note that names have been changed to protect identities.

The offender personality disorder programme is working with the charity, The Reader Organisation, to provide shared reading opportunities in PIPEs, using literature and poetry to explore complex ideas and practise inter-relational skills. For more information, please see www.thereader.org.uk/.