

National Youth Justice Conference Report 2016

Laura Kelly

2017

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Evaluation Feedback	3
2.1 Prior Knowledge	3
2.2 Previous Experience.....	3
2.3 Gained Understanding.....	4
2.4 Impact on Practice.....	5
3. Event Impact and Learning	6
4. What next?	7

1. Introduction

Organised by the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice (CYCJ), the Scottish Government and the National Youth Justice Advisory Group (NYJAG), the National Youth Justice Conference is the biggest event of the year for the Scottish youth and criminal justice sector. The conference took place across two days on the 15 and 16 of June 2016 in Dundee at the West Park Conference Centre.

The focus of the conference this year was 'Youth Justice in Practice' with an array of talks and workshops pertaining to learning disabilities in the Criminal Justice system, getting it right for girls, young people in court, justice for children and many more topics. The conference allowed practitioners to hear up-to-date youth justice research, network among their peers and reflect on the work done throughout the year in the youth and criminal justice system.

There were approximately 200 delegates in attendance, an increase of 40 from the 2015 conference. Approximately 170 attendees were representatives from 30 of Scotland's 32 local authorities, with an estimated 30 delegates also attending from National or Scotland wide organisations such as Police Scotland, Barnardos and Action for Children etc.

The following report is an accurate representation of responses received from delegates who completed and returned evaluation forms that were provided to each delegate within their conference packs.

2. Evaluation Feedback

2.1 Prior Knowledge

Professionals attending the conference were asked to describe their knowledge on Youth Justice in Practice prior to attending the conference. The chart below shows the percentages of those that felt they had good prior knowledge through to those who had little prior knowledge.

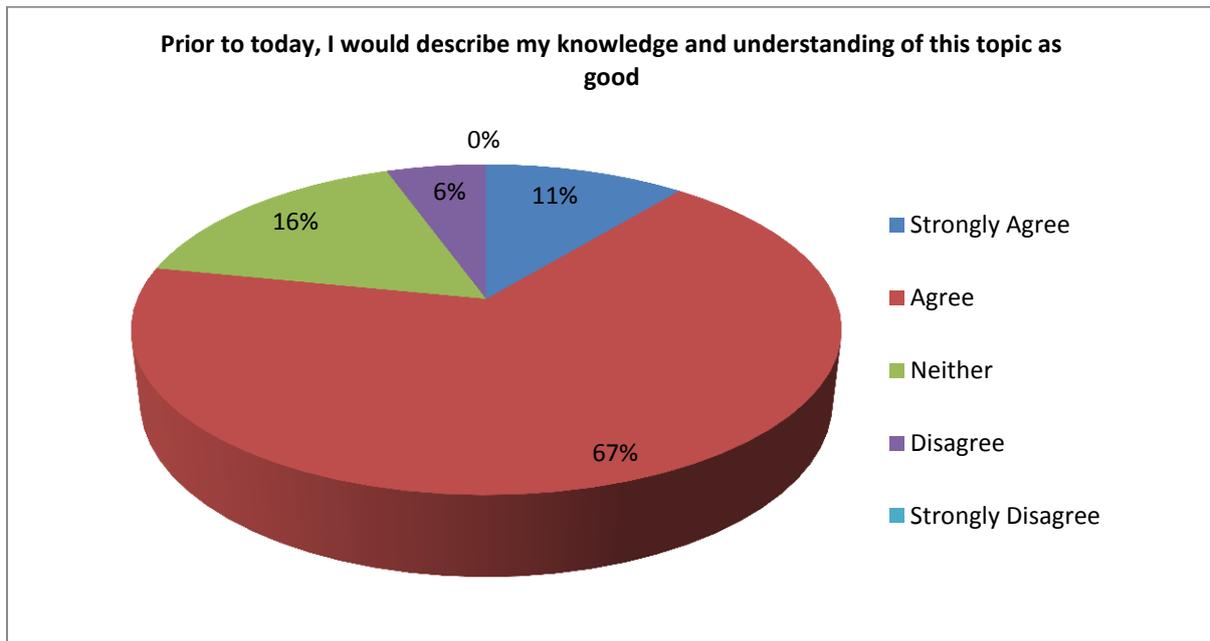


Chart 1, prior knowledge

Over half had existing good knowledge on Youth Justice in Practice, with 78% of attendees strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. A small proportion of attendees felt they had little knowledge prior to the conference, a total of 22%.

2.2 Previous Experience

Professionals attending the conference were asked if they had previous experience of working with Youth Justice in Practice. The results, shown below in chart 2, were in line with our expectations that there would be a large proportion of our attendees that already had previous experience working with youth justice in practice. As shown in the chart 92% of our audience strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

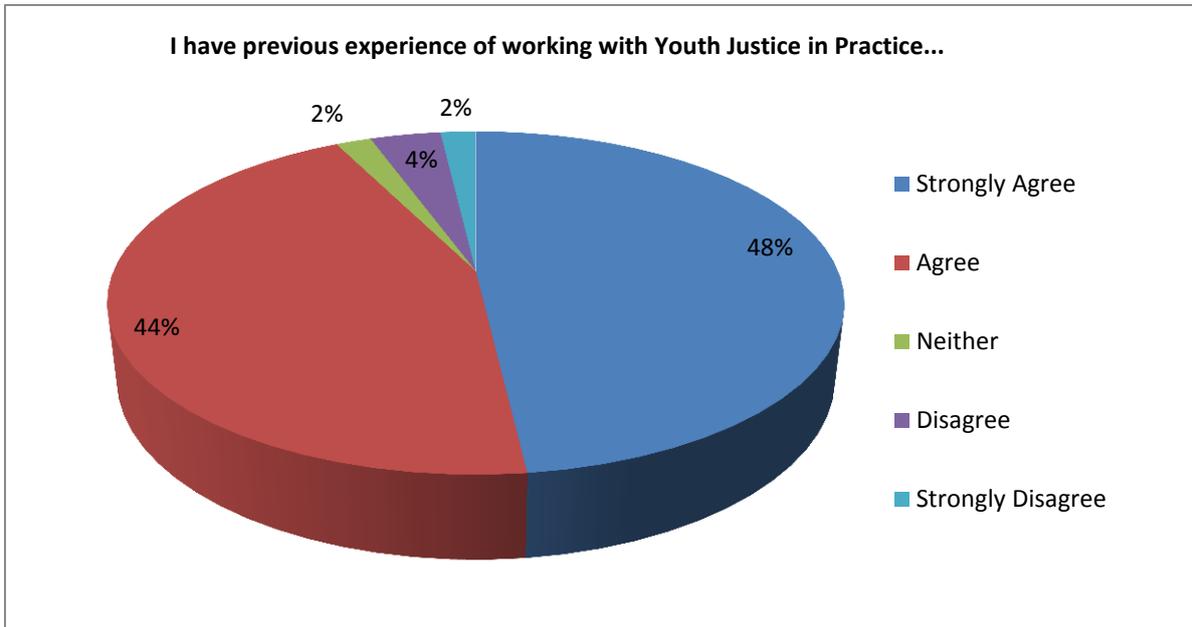


Chart 2, previous experience

2.3 Gained Understanding

Overall attendees were very positive about the understanding they gained about youth justice in practice as a result of the conference, demonstrated in Chart 3 below. 98% of attendees either strongly agreed or agreed that they had gained a greater understanding from the conference. The 2% remaining felt that they neither gained nor diminished their understanding in the area. This means 0% of attendees felt they had not gained a greater understanding from the conference in terms of understanding of youth justice in practice.

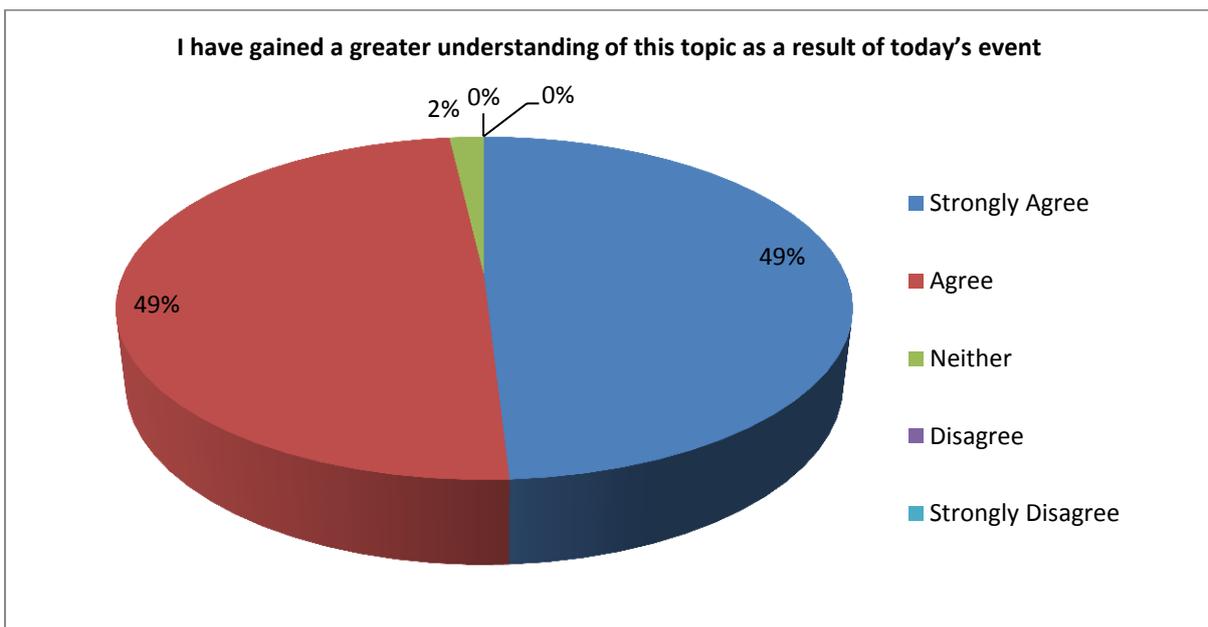


Chart 3, gained understanding

2.4 Impact on Practice

A majority of attendees felt that the knowledge gained from the seminar would impact on their own practice, as detailed in Chart 4 below. A total of 85% delegates selected strongly agree and agree that their learnings taken away from the conference would impact their practice, with only 2% of delegates disagreeing with this statement.

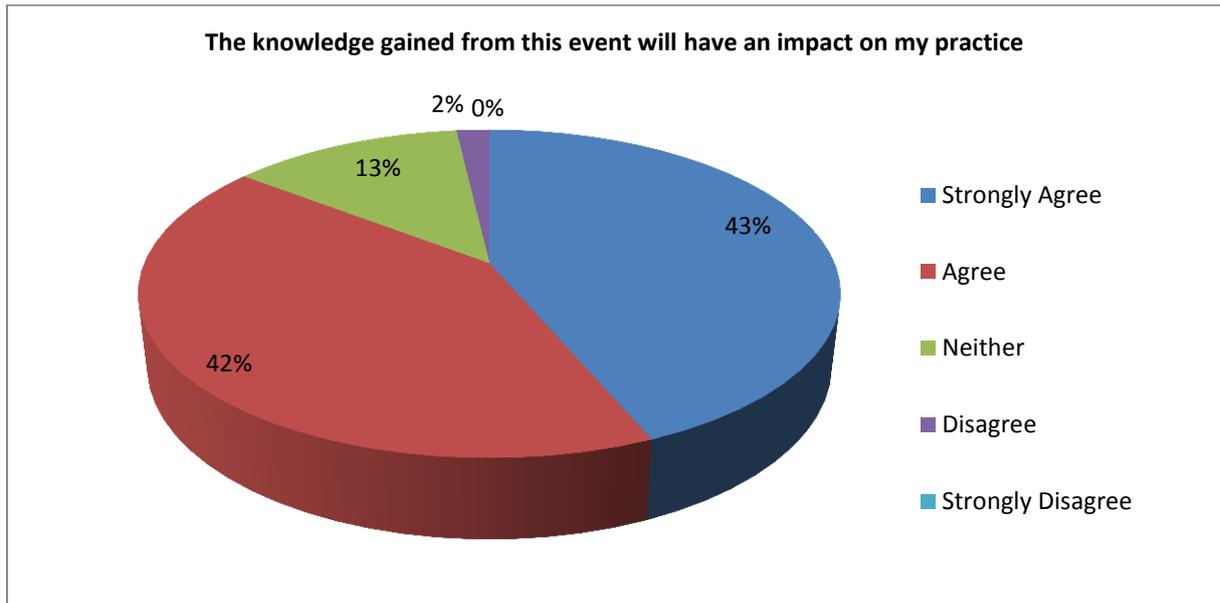


Chart 4, impact on practice

3. Event Impact and Learning

Feedback from the respondents was extremely positive with the overall view being that the range of speakers and topics were good, the workshops were relevant and interesting and both days were very well organised. 58% of respondents also voluntarily submitted their views on the venue and catering, rating these as excellent. There was a particular emphasis in the majority of feedback responses on how useful it was to hear direct, personal accounts from individuals who had been through the care and criminal justice system.

It re-invigorated my knowledge base. It has given me the time and opportunity to reflect on the work.

It was all fantastic - pace, speakers, workshops and CYCJ staff...Very informative and thought provoking.

Hearing young people's stories always inspirational, whether complimentary about services or not.

When asked what they felt was the most important thing they had learned as a result of the conference, many responses referred to Sheriff Duff's presentation and the understanding they had gained around how complex sentencing is. How crucial relationships are to young people and children was also a key topic that was mentioned by the majority of respondents, with the age of criminal responsibility also highlighted numerous times.

Relationships are crucial - the slightest support can make all the difference to a young person - not necessarily at the time but later - slowly building resilience and opportunities.

Reassuring that importance of relationships is still one of the most important factors for offenders.

Much more awareness about the redesign of community justice and how that impacts on me. Also a better understanding of how complex sentencing is: more appreciation of that aspect.

Respondents were also asked to make some suggestions of areas of the conference that they felt could be improved. Many attendees did not provide any suggestions. Those that did provide this feedback indicated that they would like to see more interaction at the event in the form of group discussions and more time for questions at the end of presentations. A minority of respondents mentioned that they would have liked there to have been an exclusive focus on Scotland, as some of the talks detailed examples from England and Wales.

4. What next?

Attendees were asked if there were any actions that they would take as a result of the conference or any further training they would like to see provided. Some responses in terms of action to take included sharing the information learned with the education sector through multi-agency teams and examining the thresholds of residential childcare workers and contacting police. In relation to training, attendees appeared to want a focus on girls training and also more training on young people in the youth justice system with learning disabilities. There was also a desire to receive regular feedback on new developments within practice via CYCJ and a keenness to attend more future events.

Regular feedback RE: new development and changes that then impact practice.

More training on young people in the CJ/YJ systems with learning disabilities and how best to support them.

We need to identify what role we want police to take in YJ - Law enforcement? Prevention? Support for YP? And then drive fundamental change within police and how they perceive YP who offend and how they deal with them. A real culture change needed.