



Inspection of
Youth
Offending

Archwilio Rhaglen Troseddwyr Ifanc



Arolygiad ar y Cyd Cyfiawnder Troseddol

Core Case Inspection of youth offending work in England and Wales

Report on youth offending
work in:

Darlington

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Foreword

This Core Case Inspection of youth offending work in Darlington took place as part of the Inspection of Youth Offending programme. We have examined a representative sample of youth offending cases from the area, and have judged how often the Public Protection and the Safeguarding aspects of the work were done to a sufficiently high level of quality. Our findings will also feed into the wider annual Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

We judged that the Safeguarding aspects of the work were done well enough 78% of the time. With the Public Protection aspects, work to keep to a minimum each individual's *Risk of Harm to others* was done well enough 78% of the time, and the work to make each individual less likely to reoffend was done well enough 75% of the time. A more detailed analysis of our findings is provided in the main body of this report, and summarised in a table in Appendix 1.

These figures can be viewed in the context of our findings from the region inspected so far. To date, the average score for *Safeguarding* work has been 63%, with scores ranging from 38-82%, the average score for *Risk of Harm* work has been 57%, with scores ranging from 36-85%, and the average score for *Likelihood of Reoffending* work has been 65%, with scores ranging from 50-82%.

In the previous inspection of February 2008, Risk of Serious Harm and vulnerability assessment and management plans were identified as areas that required improvement. Although we have found that these areas of practice still required some further development, we were pleased to see that YOS managers were determined to maintain and extend the improvements they had so far achieved.

Overall, we consider this a very encouraging set of findings. Implementing the recommendations of this report should ensure that Darlington YOS continues on its current improvement path. There are positive prospects for the future.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

January 2010

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Scoring – and Summary Table

This report provides percentage scores for each of the 'practice criteria' essentially indicating how often each aspect of work met the level of quality we were looking for. In these inspections we focus principally on the Public Protection and Safeguarding aspects of the work in each case sample.

Accordingly, we are able to provide a score that represents how often the *Public Protection* and *Safeguarding* aspects of the cases we assessed met the level of quality we were looking for, which we summarise here.

We also provide a headline 'Comment' by each score, to indicate whether we consider that this aspect of work now requires either **MINIMUM, MODERATE, SUBSTANTIAL** or **DRASTIC** improvement in the immediate future.

Safeguarding score:	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Safeguarding</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality. This score is significant in helping us to decide whether an early further inspection is needed.	
Score: 78%	Comment: MINIMUM improvement required

Public Protection – Risk of Harm score:	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Risk of Harm</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality. This score is significant in helping us to decide whether an early further inspection is needed.	
Score: 78%	Comment: MINIMUM improvement required

Public Protection - Likelihood of Reoffending score:	
This score indicates the percentage of <i>Likelihood of Reoffending</i> work that we judged to have met a sufficiently high level of quality.	
Score: 75%	Comment: MINIMUM improvement required

We advise readers of reports not to attempt close comparisons of scores between individual areas. Such comparisons are not necessarily valid as the sizes of samples vary slightly, as does the profile of cases included in each area's sample. We believe the scoring is best seen as a headline summary of what we have found in an individual area, and providing a focus for future improvement work within that area.

Recommendations (primary responsibility is indicated in brackets)

Changes are necessary to ensure that, in a higher proportion of cases:

- (1) initial assessments contain sufficient information, draw on evidence from all relevant sources and are reviewed at the appropriate intervals. (YOS Head of Service)
- (2) timely and good quality *Risk of Harm to others* and vulnerability management plans are completed and that there is effective management oversight of assessments and plans. (YOS Head of Service)

Next steps

An improvement plan addressing the recommendations should be submitted to HM Inspectorate of Probation four weeks after the publication of this inspection report. Once finalised, the plan will be forwarded to the Youth Justice Board to monitor its implementation.

Service users' perspective

Children and young people

Eighteen children and young people completed a questionnaire for the inspection.

- ◇ All the children and young people said that they were clear why they had to attend the YOS and 17 said they were told what would happen when they did. The majority said YOS staff were really interested in helping them, listened to what they had to say and had taken action to deal with matters that they raised about their needs. Fourteen had completed a *What do YOU think?* form which asked questions about them.
- ◇ Sixteen children and young people said that they had received help with a range of needs, with the majority receiving help with ETE, family and relationships, substance misuse, understanding their offending and making better decisions.
- ◇ Thirteen said that there had been improvements in their ETE; 11 out of the 14 that needed help with their health said that this had improved for them; whilst 12 said that other areas of their lives had improved as a result of their involvement with the YOS. Comments from the children and young people included: "I now have a part-time job and also learning not to do things because other people are." and "relationships with my mam and other family members has improved as she has also been getting support."
- ◇ Four children and young people were completely satisfied with the service that they received from the YOS and eight were mostly satisfied.

Victims

Twelve questionnaires were completed by victims of offending by children and young people.

- ◇ All 12 victims said that the YOS had explained the service which could be offered to them and 11 said their individual needs had been taken into account. All said that they had the chance to talk about any worries that they had about the offence or about the child or young person who committed it.
- ◇ Six had benefited from work undertaken by the child or young person. Seven said that appropriate attention had been paid to their safety, whilst the remainder said that they had no concerns about their safety.
- ◇ All of the victims expressed satisfaction with the service provided by the YOS.

Sharing good practice

Below are examples of good practice we found in the YOS.

Assessment and Sentence Planning

General Criterion: 1.3

Fourteen year old Jenny was sentenced to a six month supervision order for criminal damage offences. She had a number of health and family issues and a parenting order was made when she appeared in court. The YOS engaged well with Jenny and her parents throughout the assessment and planning processes and a range of issues that impacted on her offending behaviour were identified. A VMP was completed and a referral to CAMHS was made. She did not reoffend during the course of the order, family relationships improved, she developed better victim awareness, her motivation increased and she started to attend and became settled in school. Jenny's order was discharged early for good progress.

Outcomes

General Criterion: 3.1

Daniel was sentenced to 18 months supervision for offences involving aggressive behaviour and breaching his ASBO. He had also, on occasions, been found to be carrying a hunting knife and air rifle, which he stated were for his hobbies of catching rabbits and hunting. He was not in regular education. Supported by the YOS, Daniel obtained a place on a gamekeeping course at a local college which linked together his education needs and built on his interests. This resulted in a change of lifestyle. He no longer stayed out late at night and he had developed a better understanding of the law with regard to carrying weapons.

1. ASSESSMENT AND SENTENCE PLANNING

1.1 Risk of Harm to others:

General Criterion:

The assessment of RoH is comprehensive, accurate and timely, takes victims' issues into account and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to manage RoH.

Score:

79%

Comment:

MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) A RoSH screening was completed in 97% of cases, of which 82% were completed on time and 71% were accurate.
- (2) A full RoSH assessment was carried out in 96% of cases where the need was indicated, 79% were completed on time and to a sufficient quality.
- (3) In 89% of cases the RoSH assessment drew adequately on all appropriate information, including MAPPAs, other agencies, previous assessments and information from victims.
- (4) In appropriate cases 80% of RoSH assessments were forwarded to the secure establishment within 24 hours of sentence.
- (5) A RMP was completed in 92% of relevant cases and in 78% all details of the RoSH assessment and management were appropriately communicated to all relevant staff and agencies.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) A timely RMP was not completed in 42% of cases.
- (2) Effective management oversight was evident in under two-thirds of RoH assessments and 59% of RMPs.
- (3) Of the four cases that met the criteria for MAPPAs only two had been notified or referred to MAPPAs.

1.2 Likelihood of Reoffending:

General Criterion:

The assessment of the LoR is comprehensive, accurate and timely and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to reduce LoR.

Score:

75 %

Comment:

MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) An assessment of LoR was completed in 97% of cases and 79% were completed on time.
- (2) Children and young people and their parents/carers were actively engaged in the large majority of initial assessments.
- (3) Information from the police secure establishments, children's social care services, ETE providers, substance misuse services and other partner agencies were used to inform the majority of initial assessments.
- (4) In all 11 relevant cases the initial assessment was forwarded to the secure establishment within 24 hours of sentence.
- (5) An intervention plan was evident in 86% of cases, 77% were completed on time and 80% sufficiently addressed the child or young person's offending related factors. The most commonly addressed issues included: attitudes to offending; motivation to change; thinking and behaviour; ETE; substance misuse and emotional and mental health.
- (6) Intervention plans integrated 75% of RMPs; 92% of the plans took account of the child or young person's Safeguarding needs; and 90% included positive factors.
- (7) The relevant national standard requirements were reflected in 93% of intervention plans, which in 77% of cases gave a clear shape to the order; 73% focused on achievable change; and 93% reflected the sentencing purposes.
- (8) Objectives within the intervention plans were prioritised according to *RoH* in 85% of relevant cases and 89% were inclusive of work to address Safeguarding needs.
- (9) The vast majority (97%) of plans were sensitive to the child or young person's diversity needs and 89% took account of victims' issues.
- (10) Children and young people were actively and meaningfully involved in 90% of the plans and 71% of parents/carers were also involved.
- (11) In the vast majority of cases all partners and external agencies were actively and meaningfully involved in the planning process.

(12) In 73% of cases intervention plans were reviewed at appropriate intervals.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Half of the assessments of LoR were not considered to be of a sufficient quality. In some cases evidence was insufficient or unclear; there was a failure to identify offending related vulnerability issues; *What do you think?* was not used to inform the assessments (65%); and there had been limited contact with, or use of evidence from physical health (50%) and emotional and mental health (46%).
- (2) Only 54% of initial assessments were reviewed at appropriate intervals.

1.3 Safeguarding:	
General Criterion: <i>The assessment of Safeguarding needs is comprehensive, accurate and timely and uses Asset and other relevant assessment tools. Plans are in place to manage Safeguarding and reduce vulnerability.</i>	
Score: 74%	Comment: MODERATE improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) An Asset vulnerability screening was completed in 97% of cases; 73% were completed on time; and 69% were considered to be of a sufficient quality.
- (2) A VMP was completed in 74% of relevant cases and all were judged to have contributed to and informed interventions and other appropriate plans.
- (3) The secure establishment was made aware of vulnerability issues prior to or immediately on sentence in 91% of cases. In all cases there was active liaison and information sharing concerning Safeguarding.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Almost half of VMPs were not completed on time and a similar number were not judged to be of a sufficient standard.
- (2) Safeguarding needs were not reviewed at the appropriate intervals in 32% of cases.
- (3) A contribution had been made through the CAF and those other assessments and plans designed to safeguard the child or young person, in just 8 out of 21 cases.

- (4) There was effective management oversight of vulnerability assessment in just under two-thirds of cases.

OVERALL SCORE for quality of Assessment and Sentence Planning work: 75%

COMMENTARY on Assessment and Sentence Planning as a whole:

After a significant period of stability within its staff group, the YOS had undergone a number of staff changes during the year leading up to the inspection. This had impacted on its ability to offer uninterrupted and consistent standards of service to the children and young people it supervised. Nevertheless, in preparing for this inspection managers reviewed the YOS' practice and had themselves identified areas for improvement, a number of which reflect some of our findings. Although the YOS had started to implement an action plan to address the areas they identified, it was too early for it to have a significant impact on this inspection's findings.

2. DELIVERY AND REVIEW OF INTERVENTIONS

2.1 Protecting the public by minimising Risk of Harm to others:

General Criterion:

All reasonable actions have been taken to protect the public by keeping to a minimum the child or young person's RoH to others.

Score:

77%

Comment:

MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) *RoH* was thoroughly reviewed within three months of sentence in 71% of cases and 67% were reviewed following a significant change.
- (2) In 80% of relevant cases where there were changes in *RoH*/acute factors they were anticipated wherever feasible and 77% were identified swiftly and acted on appropriately.
- (3) Case managers and other relevant staff contributed to multi-agency meetings (apart from MAPPA) in custody in every case and in the majority of those held in the community.
- (4) Throughout the course of the sentence purposeful home visits had been carried out in accordance with the level of Safeguarding need in 73% of relevant cases.
- (5) A full assessment of victim safety had been carried out in 78% of relevant cases and it was judged that high priority was given to victim safety in 77%.
- (6) In 81% of cases the resources allocated were appropriate to the *RoH* presented.
- (7) Specific interventions to manage *RoH to others* in the community were delivered as planned in 85% of cases and 93% were reviewed following a significant change. In custody, interventions were delivered in 91% of cases and all were reviewed following a significant change.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Effective use was made of MAPPA in only two of the four appropriate cases.
- (2) Purposeful home visits had been carried out in accordance with the level of *RoH* posed in only 62% of cases.

2.2 Reducing the Likelihood of Reoffending:

General Criterion:

The case manager coordinates and facilitates the structured delivery of all elements of the intervention plan.

Score:

79%

Comment:

MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) The majority (92%) of interventions in the community were designed to reduce the LoR; where relevant, 89% were in line with the child or young person's PPO status, 82% incorporated all diversity issues, 62% were implemented in line with the intervention plan and 68% were of a good quality.
- (2) Appropriate resources were allocated according to the LoR throughout the sentence in 87% of cases.
- (3) In 92% of community and 82% of custodial sentence cases staff actively motivated and supported children and young people; and in 89% of community and 91% of custodial cases they reinforced positive behaviour.
- (4) Where appropriate YOS staff actively engaged parents/carers in 90% of custody and in all community cases.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Less than two-thirds of interventions were sequenced and reviewed appropriately.

2.3 Safeguarding the child or young person:

General Criterion:

All reasonable actions have been taken to safeguard and reduce the vulnerability of the child or young person.

Score:

84%

Comment:

MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) In all custody and in the vast majority of community cases, all necessary immediate action had been taken to safeguard and protect the child or young person and any other affected child or young person.
- (2) All necessary referrals to ensure Safeguarding had been made to other relevant agencies in all relevant custody and 91% of community cases.
- (3) In the majority of cases the YOS and all relevant partner agencies worked together to promote the Safeguarding and well-being of the child or young person in the community and custody. The agencies ensured the continuity of mainstream services in the transition from custody to the community and that specific interventions were identified and delivered, incorporating those identified in the VMP. Plans were reviewed every three months or following a significant change.
- (4) Effective management oversight of Safeguarding and vulnerability needs was evident in 89% of relevant custody cases.
- (5) Staff supported and promoted the well-being of the child or young person throughout the course of their sentence in all custodial and 92% of community cases.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Effective management oversight of Safeguarding and vulnerability needs was evident in only 64% of community cases.

OVERALL SCORE for quality of Delivery and Review of Interventions work: 81%

COMMENTARY on Delivery and Review of Interventions as a whole:

These were very good scores for the YOS and it is clear that practice had improved considerably since the previous inspection in February 2008. There were examples of good engagement with children and young people, using the range of resources available to the YOS.

3. OUTCOMES

3.1 Achievement of outcomes:

General Criterion:

Outcomes are achieved in relation to RoH, LoR and Safeguarding.

Score:

59%

Comment:

SUBSTANTIAL improvement required

Strengths:

- (1) *RoH to others* had been effectively managed in 80% of cases.
- (2) Where the child and young person had not complied with the requirements of the sentence, enforcement action had been taken sufficiently well in 91% of cases.
- (3) All reasonable action was taken to keep children and young people safe in 83% of relevant cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) There had been a reduction of 41% in frequency and 44% in seriousness of offending.
- (2) The child or young person had complied with the requirements of the sentence in only 42% of cases.
- (3) There had been a reduction in risk factors linked to Safeguarding in only 48% of cases.

3.2 Sustaining outcomes:

General Criterion:

Outcomes are sustained in relation to RoH, LoR and Safeguarding.

Score:

92%

Comment:

MINIMUM improvement required

Strengths:

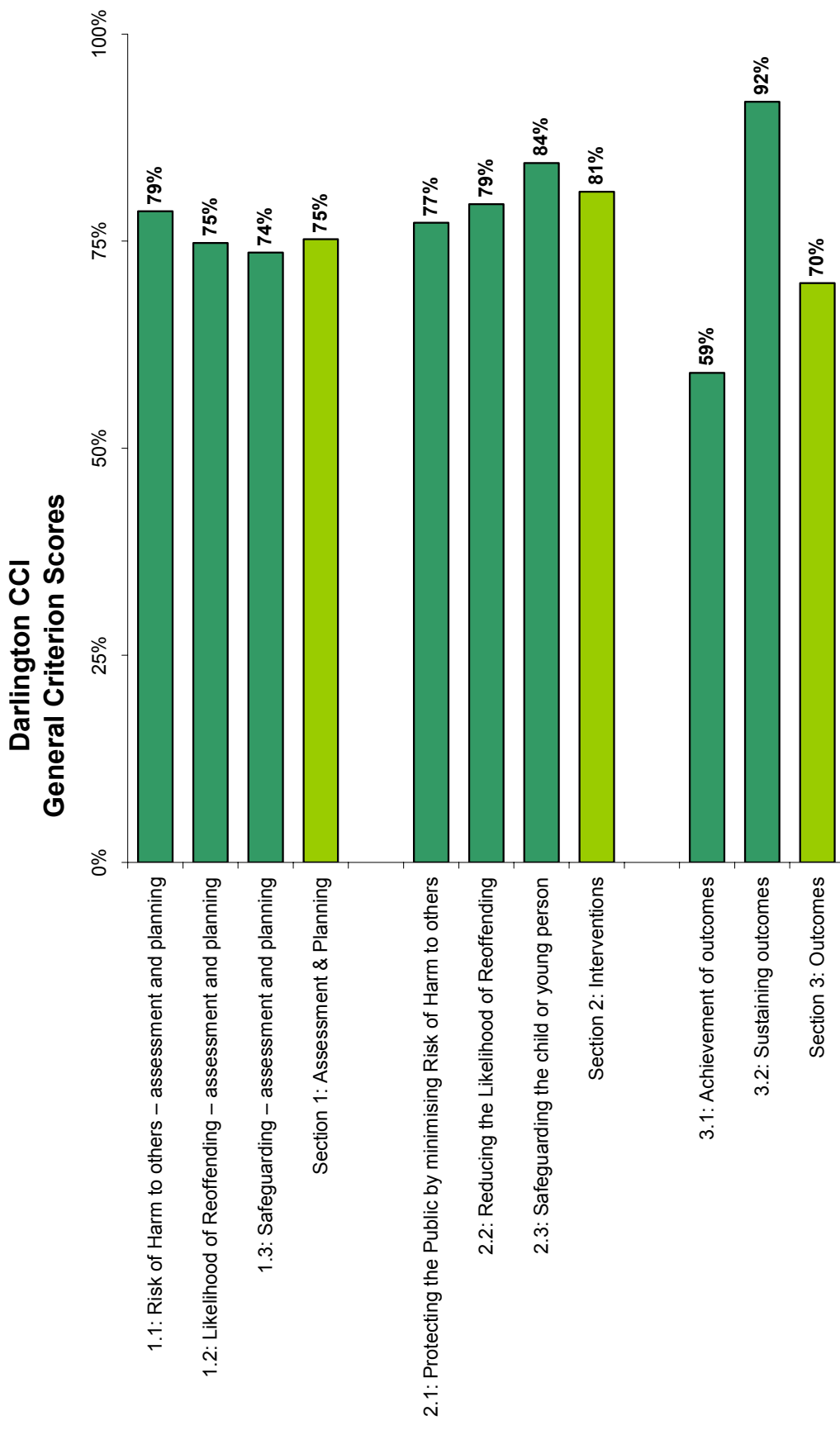
- (1) Full attention had been given to community integration issues during the custodial phase of sentences in all cases; while the figure for the community phase was 92%.
- (2) Action had been taken to ensure that positive outcomes achieved during the custodial and community phases were sustainable in 91% and 89% of cases respectively.

OVERALL SCORE for quality of Outcomes work: 70%

COMMENTARY on Outcomes as a whole:

There was evidence that some positive outcomes had been achieved, with many offending related factors improved, particularly: lifestyles, substance misuse and attitudes to offending behaviour. Staff engaged well with children and young people, including some very complex cases that evidenced good work involving families and local communities.

Appendix 1: Summary



Appendix 2: Contextual information

Area

Darlington YOS was located in the North-East region of England.

The area had a population of 97,838 as measured in the Census 2001, 10.5% of which were aged ten to 17 years old. This was slightly higher than the average for England/Wales, which was 10.4%.

The population of Darlington was predominantly white British (97.9%). The population with a black and minority ethnic heritage (2.1%) was below the average for England/Wales.

Reported offences for which children and young people aged ten to 17 years old received a pre-court disposal or a court disposal in 2008/2009, at 59 per 1,000, were above the average for England/Wales of 46.

YOS

The YOS boundaries were within those of the Durham police and probation areas. The County Durham & Darlington PCT covered the area.

The YOS was located within the Children and Family Division of the council. The Head of Service was line managed by the Assistant Director of Children's Services.

The YOS Management Board was chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council.

The YOS was based in one main office located in the centre of Darlington. ISSP was delivered by the Tees Valley ISSP consortium, with case managing staff dedicated to Darlington YOS.

YJB Performance Data

The YJB summary of national indicators available at the time of the inspection was for the period April 2008 to March 2009.

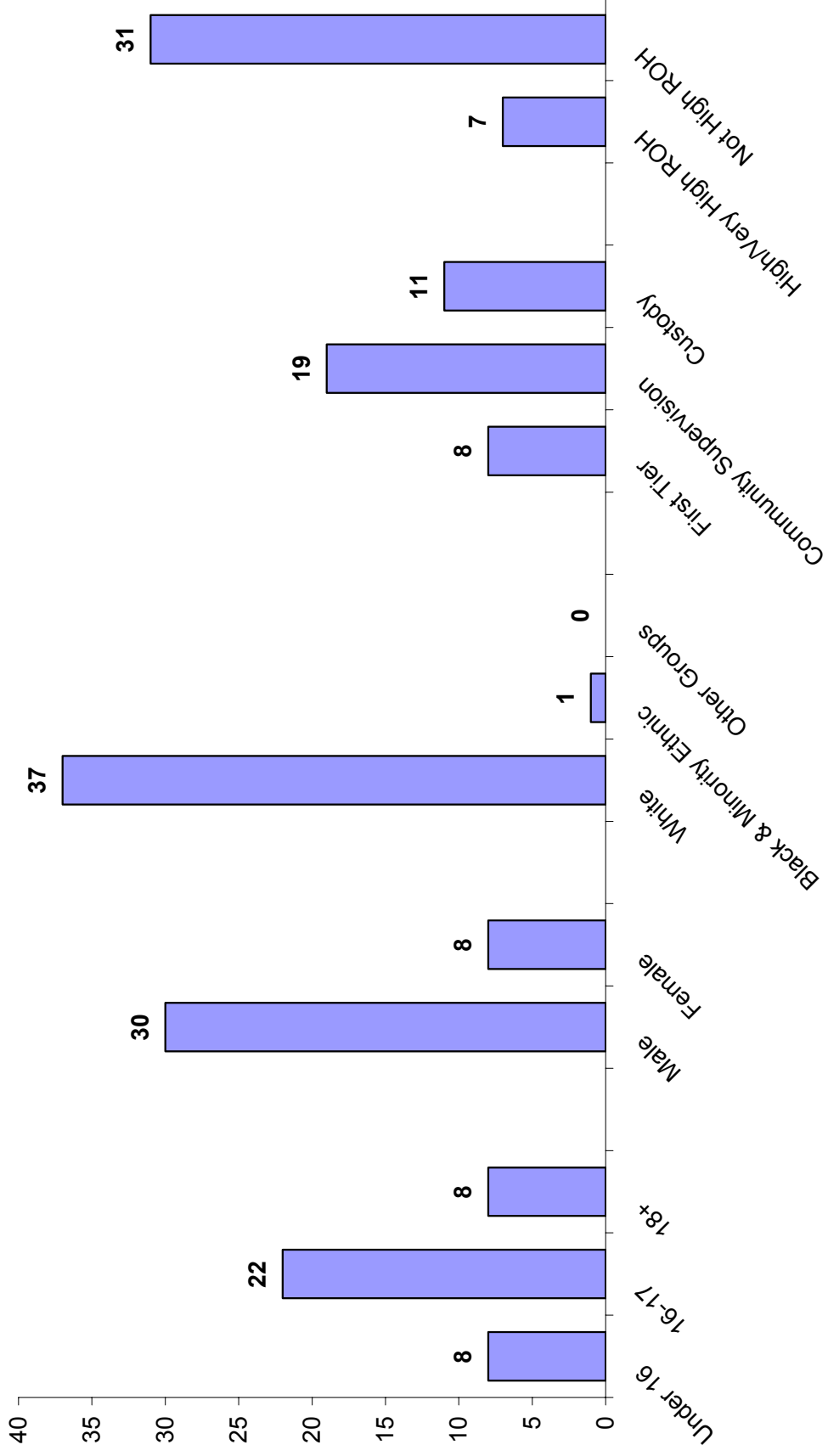
Darlington's performance on ensuring children and young people known to the YOS were in suitable education, training or employment was 70.7%. This was better than the previous year, but below the England average of 72.4%.

Performance on ensuring suitable accommodation by the end of the sentence was 100%. This was better than the previous year, and above the England average of 95.3%.

The "Reoffending rate after 9 months" was 78%, better than the England average of 85% (See Glossary).

Appendix 3a: Inspection data chart

Case sample information: Darlington



Appendix 3b: Inspection data

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in October 2009.

The inspection consisted of:

- ◇ examination of practice in a sample of cases, normally in conjunction with the case manager or other representative
- ◇ evidence in advance
- ◇ questionnaire responses from children and young people, and victims

We have also seen YJB performance data and assessments relating to this YOS.

Appendix 4: Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice

Information on the Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice can be found on our website:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/inspectorates/hmi-probation>

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

*HM Chief Inspector of Probation
2nd Floor, Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London, SW1P 2BQ*

Appendix 5: Glossary

ASB/ASBO	Antisocial behaviour/Antisocial Behaviour Order
Asset	A structured assessment tool based on research and developed by the Youth Justice Board looking at the young person's offence, personal circumstances, attitudes and beliefs which have contributed to their offending behaviour
CAF	Common Assessment Framework: a standardised assessment of a child or young person's needs and of how those needs can be met. It is undertaken by the lead professional in a case, with contributions from all others involved with that individual
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: part of the National Health Service, providing specialist mental health and behavioural services to children and young people up to at least 16 years of age
Careworks	One of the two electronic case management systems for youth offending work currently in use in England and Wales. See also YOIS+
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DTO	Detention and Training Order, a custodial sentence for the young
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, training and education: work to improve an individual's learning, and to increase their employment prospects
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HM	Her Majesty's
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMI Prisons	HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
Interventions; <i>constructive</i> and <i>restrictive</i> interventions	<p>Work with an individual that is designed to change their offending behaviour and/or to support public protection.</p> <p>A <i>constructive</i> intervention is where the primary purpose is to reduce Likelihood of Reoffending.</p> <p>A <i>restrictive</i> intervention is where the primary purpose is to keep to a minimum the individual's <i>Risk of Harm to others</i>. Example: with a sex offender, a <i>constructive intervention</i> might be to put them through an accredited sex offender programme; a <i>restrictive intervention</i> (to minimise their <i>Risk of Harm</i>) might be to monitor regularly and meticulously their accommodation, their employment and the places they frequent, imposing and enforcing clear restrictions as appropriate to each case. NB. Both types of intervention are important</p>
ISSP	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme: this intervention is attached to the start of some orders and licences and provides initially at least 25 hours programme contact including a substantial proportion of employment, training and education
LoR	Likelihood of Reoffending. See also <i>constructive</i> Interventions
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board: set up in each local authority (as a result of the Children Act 2004) to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of the multi-agency work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality

MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher <i>Risk of Harm to others</i>
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills: the Inspectorate for those services in England (not Wales, for which see Estyn)
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PPO	Prolific and other Priority Offender: designated offenders, adult or young, who receive extra attention from the Criminal Justice System agencies
Pre-CAF	This is a simple 'Request for Service' in those instances when a Common Assessment Framework may not be required. It can be used for requesting one or two additional services, e.g. health, social care or educational
PSR	Pre-sentence report: for a court
"Reoffending rate after 9 months"	A measure used by the Youth Justice Board. It indicates how many further offences are recorded as having been committed in a 9-month period by individuals under current supervision of the relevant YOT, and it can be either more or less than 100%. '110%' would therefore mean that exactly 110 further offences have been counted as having been committed 'per 100 individuals under supervision' in that period. The quoted national average rate for England in early 2009 was 85%
RMP	Risk management plan: a plan to minimise the individual's <i>Risk of Harm</i>
RoH	<i>Risk of Harm to others</i> . See also <i>restrictive Interventions</i>
'RoH work', or 'Risk of Harm work'	This is the term generally used by HMI Probation to describe work to protect the public, primarily using <i>restrictive interventions</i> , to keep to a minimum the individual's opportunity to behave in a way that is a <i>Risk of Harm to others</i>
RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm: a term used in Asset. HMI Probation prefers not to use this term as it does not help to clarify the distinction between the <i>probability</i> of an event occurring and the <i>impact/severity</i> of the event. The term <i>Risk of Serious Harm</i> only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using ' <i>Risk of Harm</i> ' enables the necessary attention to be given to those offenders for whom lower <i>impact/severity</i> harmful behaviour is <i>probable</i>
SIFA	Screening Interview for Adolescents: Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for specialist workers
SQIFA	Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents: Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for YOT workers
VMP	Vulnerability management plan: a plan to safeguard the well-being of the individual under supervision
YJB	Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
YOI	Young Offenders Institution: a Prison Service institution for young people remanded in custody or sentenced to custody
YOIS+	Youth Offending Information System: one of the two electronic case management systems for youth offending work currently in use in England and Wales. See also Careworks
YOS/T	Youth Offending Service/Team