



**JOINT INSPECTION OF YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS
HM INSPECTORATE OF PROBATION**

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**Press
Notice**

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11 OCTOBER 2006

**BARNET YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE –
PUBLICATION OF INSPECTION REPORT**

The latest report from the third phase of inspections of Youth Offending Teams (YOT) in England and Wales was published today. A multi-agency inspection team carried out Barnet Youth Offending Service (YOS) inspection.

Andrew Bridges, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, said:

“We found the Barnet Youth Offending Service to be well managed with a broad range of services and a robust and supportive governance structure that was fully embedded in the local authority performance management arrangements. These arrangements helped to ensure the work of the Youth Offending Service contributed to the broader strategic framework for children’s services in the area. The contribution to local services provided by the Youth Offending Service was held in high regard among the partner agencies with which it worked.

Many aspects of the Youth Offending Service’s work had been developed over time and there was a clear focus on the provision of high quality services for those that used them. We found a team ‘culture’ that was innovative and had a focus on addressing both the needs and the Risk of Harm and risk of reoffending issues posed by the children and young people with whom they worked. We saw many examples of effective partnership work with young people. Well developed staff recruitment, support and development arrangements were in place and contributed to the effectiveness of the team.

However, some aspects of practice needed attention and improvement. These included the quality of pre-sentence reports, the quality of initial and review supervision plans and the profile of victims and restorative justice work.

Both managers and front line staff were keen to develop further the work of the organisation by addressing the recommendations contained in this report. The Barnet Youth Offending Service had a strong platform of service delivery and we are confident it will continue to build upon this into the future.”

The report’s main findings are:

Management

- Arrangements for the Youth Offending Service were very well developed and provided an effective framework to address the strategic, performance and operational aspects of the organisation.
- Services were strengthened by positive partnership relationships at the strategic and operational levels, although, the profile of the probation area needed to be improved. The Youth Offending Service would also benefit from increased analysis of the outcomes achieved from its work.
- A positive team culture was in evidence, underpinned by good staff development and organisational communication processes.
- However, the temporary nature of many staff employment contracts gave rise to concern. Plans were in hand to expand the remit of the Youth Offending Service.
- The Management Board was aware of the pressures on the Youth Offending Service management group and the limited physical space available to the team and it was taking steps to ensure that future developments did not impact negatively on the Youth Offending Service.

Work in the courts

- Good liaison with the local courts was evident and underpinned by a recent service level agreement.
- Youth Offending Service needs had been included in plans for developing the court premises.
- However, many pre-sentence reports did not sufficiently differentiate between the Risk of Harm and the risk of reoffending issues, nor did they adequately address victims’ issues.

Work with children and young people in the community

- Processes were in place to address safeguarding issues. The Youth Inclusion Support Panel arrangements were well developed, with plans to further expand this work.

- Risk of Harm and risk of reoffending assessments were routine practice, although not all the relevant case files had been annotated to indicate that managers had reviewed them. In general, the Youth Offending Service offered a broad range of relevant services, often underpinned by partnership work.
- However, the quality of supervision plans needed to be improved, as did the rescoring of Asset, along with basic skills assessments and interventions.

Work with children and young people subject to Detention and Training Orders (DTOs)

- The arrangements were clear and benefited from good working relationships with the key secure establishments which catered for Barnet children and young people.
- Good communication and information sharing arrangements were seen. The Youth Offending Service took steps to involve parents and carers in this work.

Victims and restorative justice

- This aspect of service delivery was the least well developed in the Youth Offending Service.
- Arrangements were in place to ensure that victims would be offered contact with the Youth Offending Service, and children and young people would have opportunities to participate in restorative justice work.
- The profile of this work needed to be raised and the plans that had been made in this respect were timely.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The inspection of Barnet YOT took place between February and May 2006.
2. The London Borough of Barnet is located in the north of the city of London, in the South-East of England. Barnet had a total population of 314,564, measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 22.7% were aged 0-17 years at the time of the census. This figure exactly matched the average for England.
3. Nine Inspectorates conduct the Youth Offending Team Inspections. They are Commission for Social Care Inspection, Estyn (HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation, Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.
4. The YOT inspection programme started in June 2003. All 155 YOTs within England and Wales are being inspected over a five to six year cycle.
5. The inspection will be carried out in line with the Government's commitment to proportionate and coordinated inspection in local government, informed by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment results and the Wales Programme for Improvement. A programme has therefore been developed that:
 - is proportionate to risk and only inspects those areas of work where a team is performing well in order to disseminate good practice
 - complements, and is coordinated with, other inspection programmes, including those currently being developed following the publication of the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters* (2003)
 - takes account of YOTs' recent development as organisations.
6. Comprehensive standards and criteria have been developed to cover the first phase of the inspection, focusing on:
 - management and partnership arrangements
 - children and young people considered at risk of offending
 - children and young people who offend
 - parents/carers of children and young people who are at risk of offending or who offend
 - work with victims of crime.