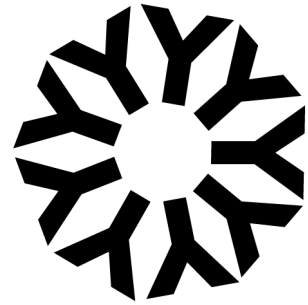


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Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on: Bath and North
East Somerset
Youth Offending Team

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Foreword

The inspection of Bath and North East Somerset took place in the fourth phase of our YOT inspection programme and was undertaken in conjunction with the Enhanced Youth Inspection, the Joint Area Review of children's services and the Corporate Assessment. The findings also contributed to the latter two inspections.

Changes within the local authority's services to children, in particular the development of Children's Trust and Integrated Youth support services arrangements, had led to the restructuring of both the YOT operational management arrangements. We were concerned that the role of the steering group in promoting and holding the YOT to account had been diminished by these developments.

Partnership arrangements were good. In particular, the prevention work partnership with the Compass project, Black Families Education project and Mentoring Plus was seen as a particular strength.

Considerable work was needed on Risk of Harm, vulnerability, safeguarding and victim awareness. A number of the practice issues raised by the inspection had been identified by the YOT prior to the inspection. Work had already started to improve the assessment and management of Risk of Harm. The YOT management and staff were committed to improving the quality of their work. This report contains a number of recommendations that we believe will assist the YOT to consolidate work already started.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

August 2008

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff from the YOT, members of the Steering Group and partner organisations for their assistance in ensuring the smooth running of this inspection.

We would particularly like to express our gratitude to Sally Churchyard, YOT Service Manager, and Jackie Deas, Operations Manager, for their commitment to the inspection.

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Glossary

ASB	Antisocial behaviour
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
BANES	Bath and North East Somerset local government area
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
ETE	Employment, training and education
HM	Her Majesty's
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
ISSP	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme
IYSS	Integrated youth support services
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ONSET	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board for work with children and young people at risk of offending
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PPO	Prolific and other priority offender
PSR	Pre-sentence report
RAG	Responsible Authorities Group
RoH	Risk of Harm
RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm
SLA	Service level agreement
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bounded
YISP	Youth Inclusion Support Panel
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOI	Young Offender Institution
YOIS	Youth Offender Information System
YOT	Youth Offending Team
YSG	YOT Steering Group

Summary

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Judgement	Descriptor
4	Excellent – performs strongly, well above minimum requirements with outstanding features
3	Good – performs well, consistently above minimum requirements with no important shortcomings
2	Adequate – only meets minimum requirements
1	Inadequate – does not deliver minimum requirements, with many important shortcomings

Work in the courts

- ◇ The YOT had positive relationships with other youth court users and magistrates, and good links in appropriate arenas. Relationships with Crown Court users were less developed.
- ◇ Court staff were knowledgeable and highly regarded and there were effective operational systems in place.
- ◇ All reports to the court contained clear proposals that were followed in three-quarters of cases. Reports were produced in a timely manner. In almost half the cases reports did not draw upon relevant evidence from the YOT's assessment tool, Asset.
- ◇ Children and young people as young as 15 and 16 remanded into the care of the local authority had been inappropriately placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- ◇ Remands into custody were proactively managed, had reduced and compared well against family, regional and national levels.

Work with children and young people in the community

- ◇ There was a year-on-year reduction in the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system and this exceeded the Youth Justice Board target of a five per cent reduction ahead of the target date.
- ◇ The Early Intervention Compass project took referrals from a wide range of partners. Interventions were based on appropriate assessments and were sensitive to the diverse needs of children and young people.
- ◇ Home visits were routinely undertaken and parents/carers were effectively involved in all cases.
- ◇ Diversity issues that might have hindered the work of the YOT were routinely explored with children and young people as part of the assessment process. Where issues were identified, suitable plans to minimise their impact had been made in all cases.
- ◇ As a result of the absence of a Risk of Serious Harm and vulnerability action plan tool in work with children and young people at risk of offending, risk and vulnerability factors were not accurately recorded, and planning was not put in place to meet risk factors in those cases inspected.
- ◇ Initial Asset assessments and reviews were not completed to a sufficient standard, and risk management plans and vulnerability action plans were not completed in all cases required.
- ◇ Accompanying the low level of appropriate Risk of Serious Harm assessments undertaken there was also little understanding of the importance of risk management plans and we found no plans completed among the cases inspected.
- ◇ Judgements about the acceptability of absences were consistent and appropriate in all cases. Case managers demonstrated a strong

commitment to engaging children and young people even when they were approaching breach proceedings.

- ◆ Where referrals for specialist assessment outside the YOT were made for children and young people over statutory school age, the required services were provided in all but one case.
- ◆ Parenting work was offered in a high proportion of cases. Interventions were delivered in a variety of ways aimed at meeting the particular needs of parents. Feedback from parents was very positive.

Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences

- ◆ In all but one case the Risk of Serious Harm to others had been accurately assessed. All of the risk classifications were assessed as accurate.
- ◆ Joint work had been undertaken between the YOT and the secure establishment staff to address mental health issues and substance misuse needs as identified in the Asset assessment.
- ◆ Full attention had been paid to the methods likely to be most effective with the child or young person in only three of the eight cases.

Victims and restorative justice

- ◆ All victims were contacted by the YOT within the required timescale both by letter and telephone call. Victims were also offered a home visit, if requested.
- ◆ Data from the inspection showed that in 78% of cases no reparation had been undertaken. This included cases where reparation was a requirement of the court order.

Management and leadership

- ◆ The YOT steering group and the Responsible Authorities Group had ensured that the Youth Justice Plan was integrated with the Community Safety Plan and other relevant children and young people's plans.
- ◆ The YOT Manager was an influential member of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The YOT also contributed to a wide range of other multi-agency initiatives such as those relating to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, police tasking and antisocial behaviour.
- ◆ The YOT had written protocols, renewed annually, with all key partners including Project 28, the highly valued local specialist provider of drugs and alcohol services for children and young people.
- ◆ Most staff reported receiving regular supervision to a sufficient standard. Six members of staff described their supervision as excellent.

Recommendations

Changes are necessary to ensure that (*primary responsibility is indicated in brackets*):

- (1) children and young people remanded into the care of the local authority by the courts are appropriately accommodated and provided with support during any bail period (*Director of the children's service*)
- (2) Risk of Serious Harm to others and vulnerability factors are assessed and sufficient management oversight is recorded (*YOT Manager*)
- (3) Asset assessments and reviews are completed to a sufficient standard in all cases (*YOT Manager*)
- (4) vulnerability action plans and risk management plans are completed in all necessary cases (*YOT Manager*)
- (5) the engagement of victims in restorative justice processes increases (*YOT Manager*)
- (6) the quality and extent of victim-related and restorative justice work is significantly improved throughout the YOT (*YOT Manager*)
- (7) sufficient healthcare provision is made available to all children and young people on release from custody (*YOT Manager & BANES Primary Care Trust*)
- (8) learning plans set at Ashfield Young Offender Institution during the custodial phase of a child or young person's sentence contain objectives that are appropriately sequenced to ensure that offending behaviour is prioritised and progress is measurable (*Youth Justice Board*)
- (9) learning plans started during the custodial phase of a child or young person's sentence are continued following their release into the community (*YOT Manager*)
- (10) quality assurance and other YOT processes deliver an appropriate level of consistency in service delivery (*Chair of YOT steering group*)
- (11) the strategic management of the YOT is represented at a senior level within the local authority to both promote the YOT and to hold it to account (*Chair of the Responsible Authorities Group*).

Next steps

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

Service users' perspective

Children and young people

Thirteen children and young people completed a questionnaire for the inspection, of which nine were completed interactively using computer software. The remainder were completed on paper, either independently or during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ Nearly all the responses to the questionnaire indicated that the YOT treated children and young people with respect.
- ◇ All children and young people who answered the questionnaire knew why they had to attend the YOT, what was expected of them and what would happen if they failed to attend. All respondents felt that their worker was interested in them and that the YOT did their best to help them.
- ◇ Most respondents were able to identify areas of their lives that had improved as a result of the YOT's interventions and said they were less likely to reoffend.
- ◇ Positive comments included:
 - *"I would like to thank you for your help and support and for all of there help in the Bath YOT".*
 - *"Totally happy with the YOT they have really helped me. I didn't know what I would do without them".*

Two interviews were conducted with children and young people in custody.

- ◇ The YOT placed a high value on maintaining contact with children and young people in custody, at least through all the planning meetings. Although there were only two children or young people in custody at the time of the inspection, it was clear that they had regular contact with their case manager and felt able to contact them if they needed help. One child or young person also reported that the YOT had helped maintain contact with their parents/carers and wider family.
- ◇ Both children and young people felt they were treated fairly and with respect by the YOT and believed that the YOT workers were interested in them.

Parents/carers

Nine questionnaires were completed by parents/carers, either independently or during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ Almost all parents/carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the services they had received from the YOT, with two-thirds stating

that they were either reasonably or completely satisfied. Only one parent said they were not satisfied at all.

- ◇ As a result of contact with the YOT, almost all felt their circumstances had become better for themselves and for their children or young people.
- ◇ All but one parent/carer felt they had received sufficient information and had been kept well informed by the YOT.
- ◇ One parent/carer made the following comment:
 - *"I requested help with parenting.... the consequences, has been an all-round positive and beneficial effect for us both.... the support has been valuable through a very distressing time for us both and at a crucial time for my son. In terms of his age and the trouble he was getting into".*

Victims

Six questionnaires were completed by victims of offending by children and young people, either independently or during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ Half of the respondents described themselves as completely satisfied with their contact with the YOT; one described him/herself as not at all satisfied.
- ◇ All but one of the respondents said the YOT had explained the services they could offer and felt their individual needs had been taken into account.
- ◇ In all but one case victims felt they had had an opportunity to discuss their worries about the offence or the child or young person who had committed the offence.
- ◇ Comments made by victims included:
 - *"The service provided the necessary information throughout the process. Well done".*
 - *"Felt I had not been able to ask the questions I had wanted to ask at the panel. Felt let down by lack of support for daughter who was the victim. Felt unwilling to make a complaint as my daughter was moving on and therefore did not want to continue to drag things up for her sake".*
 - *"Would have liked to have been offered some support/help in dealing with the situation/my feelings after the event".*
 - *"The service was good - much appreciated".*

Sharing good practice

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

Work in the courts

General criterion: 1.2

Sam reoffended within a week of being placed on a referral order. The YOT bail support worker and ISSP workers put together an ISSP bail package that complemented the referral order. As a result of joint working between the case manager and ISSP, accommodation and Connexions workers, Sam successfully completed his order and secured more appropriate accommodation and a place at the local college.

Work with children and young people at risk of offending

General criterion: 2.4

Brendan was ten years old and lived with his disabled mother in one room supported accommodation. Mum took significant amounts of painkillers at night and did not wake up in the morning to give him breakfast or see him off to school. Brendan frequently truanted or attended late, mixing with older children or young people known to the YOT. His YISP worker worked with children's services to engage with Brendan and offer him support. Subsequently, he attended school, mixing with more age-appropriate friends and has developed an interest in football, playing for the school and a local team. The YISP worker arranged a mentor for Brendan to continue adult support after the YISP supervision had finished.

Work with children and young people who have offended

General criterion: 2.8

Chris was sentenced to a referral order for criminal damage for graffiti spraying. His initial Asset assessment identified a high level of drug use and poor social and communication skills. Chris was referred to a number of agencies including Project 28, a drug and alcohol agency. Throughout the order he was seen twice a week. His drug taking was reduced and his artistic talents were redirected into designing and making T-shirts.

**Work with
parents/carers**

**General criterion:
2.9**

At the time of his sentence, Garry's relationship with his mother had broken down and he had been asked to leave the family home. As part of his ISSP, the YOT's parenting worker undertook a number of one-to-one and joint sessions with Garry and his mother. Garry returned home on a trial basis and after two months he was still at home. Comments from his mother were very positive; she reported an improvement in his attitude and behaviour at home and that he had gained employment.

**Outcomes of work
with children and
young people in the
community**

**General criterion:
2.11**

Naomi had, as part of her court order, been attending Project 28 to address substance misuse problems. As a result of the support offered both by the project workers and her case manager, Naomi not only completed her programme and order successfully, but had also applied to be a volunteer with the project, supporting other children and young people.

**Victims and
restorative justice**

**General criterion:
4.1**

Dan was subject to a referral order for criminal damage by spraying graffiti on buildings. The caseworker arranged for Dan to take part in a project removing graffiti around Bath. Dan completed reparation work clearing up the area around the premises he had sprayed.

**Management and
leadership**

**General criterion:
5.3**

When appropriate, the YOT involved service users in the recruitment of new staff. This included children and young people and parents/carers interviewing candidates, which enabled the YOT to remain service-user focused during the recruitment process.

1. WORK IN THE COURTS

1.1 General criterion:

Children and young people are safeguarded and the likelihood of their further offending reduced by the provision of an appropriate pre-sentence service, including bail supervision and support programmes.

Strengths:

- (1) There was a clear process in place for an administrator to telephone the police station each morning. This ensured they were aware of children and young people held in police or court cells overnight and at risk of remand into secure accommodation or custody, so they could begin the process of considering and preparing an appropriate bail support package.
- (2) The bail support worker and ISSP staff were able to offer different levels of bail support as an alternative to a custodial remand. Due to the lack of appropriate accommodation in the area, the bail support worker made great efforts to enable the child or young person to be bailed to their wider family.
- (3) YOT workers liaised with appropriate legal staff prior to youth panel hearings and offered supervision and support services based on the individual needs of the child or young person, the likelihood of reoffending and the RoH that they posed.
- (4) YOIS, the YOT's electronic database, was available at court. There was secure dedicated office space within the court building for YOT staff.
- (5) The YOT had access to the children's service's information systems, which enabled them to check whether each child or young person was known to children's services.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Although the YOT court staff had office space within the court building, this was within the secure court area and not suitable for interviewing children and young people or their parents/carers. The only interview space was shared with defence solicitors and was often not available. Court staff interviewed during the inspection believed this had hindered their ability to interview children and young people at court and to assist the court with stand-down reports and assessments.
- (2) Children and young people as young as 15 or 16 remanded into the care of the local authority were inappropriately placed in bed and breakfast

accommodation. This accommodation was also used by older offenders.

1.2 General criterion:

Courts are assisted in making informed, timely and effective decisions by the provision of good quality reports and appropriate information from the YOT.

The YOT had a small court team that covered the weekly youth court sittings. Staff cover was provided for the local Crown Court as necessary.

Strengths:

- (1) YOT staff responsible for work in court were well trained, knowledgeable and aware of local policies and procedures. They provided an effective service to the youth court that was valued by sentencers and court staff. Sentencers interviewed expressed their confidence in the YOT and its court staff.
- (2) We found a positive relationship between the YOT and the youth court. Work was based on a recently reviewed Youth Justice Service agreement. Staff at all levels engaged well on court duty, case progression meetings, quarterly court users' meetings and meetings of the youth panel. Sentencers interviewed by the inspection team were impressed with the service they received.
- (3) A weekly meeting of YOT court staff kept case managers informed of children and young people due in court, and provided a back-up system to ensure that PSRs were ready and, if necessary, bail packages were reviewed.
- (4) Weekend and bank holiday service for the youth court, held at Bristol magistrates' court, was shared on a rota basis with three neighbouring YOTs. This arrangement was formalised in a protocol between all participating YOTs, and was reviewed periodically.
- (5) All PSRs read were prepared within the national standard timescales and were of the appropriate type of report. All but two reports were completed using the nationally approved format and were deemed to have been balanced, verified and factually accurate. The risk section of PSRs differentiated between likelihood of reoffending and RoH to others in the vast majority of cases.
- (6) All reports contained clear proposals that were followed in three-quarters of cases.
- (7) In all but one case the parent or carer was interviewed for the specific reason of preparing a report for the court.
- (8) The recidivism key performance indicator showed that local performance was higher than national and regional averages. Also, the proportion of children

and young people sentenced to custody had reduced from 13% to just over 5%.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Fewer than a third of reports inspected contained an assessment of the vulnerability of children and young people appearing before the court.
- (2) Reports did not routinely include an assessment of victims' wishes with regard to reparation or restorative justice. Fewer than a quarter of reports included appropriate victim information.
- (3) There was little evidence that children and young people or their parents/carers were provided with a copy of the PSR. In only half of cases inspected did we find evidence that case managers had fully explained the PSR to children and young people or their parents/carers.
- (4) There was no formal process in place to receive feedback from sentencers on the quality of PSRs in order to improve the quality and consistency of reports submitted to the court.

Conclusion: These criteria are assessed as **adequate**.

2. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

Work with children and young people at risk of offending

2.1 General criterion:

The YOT (or others on its behalf) undertakes appropriate activities to prevent children and young people from offending.

The YOT's work with children and young people at risk of offending was run in partnership with the Compass project and case managed by three YISP workers based within the YOT. All referrals were considered by a multi-agency YISP panel, chaired by the Children's Fund and included representatives from education, children's services (education, social care, health) and the police.

Strengths:

- (1) The Compass project took referrals for children aged eight to 17 from partner agencies across the area and delivered interventions. In all cases inspected the referrals were appropriate and made in accordance with local policies. All but two initial Onset assessments were completed on time, with almost 90% being of sufficient quality.
- (2) Liaison with the referring agency was good and contacts were made with an appropriate range of services to meet the needs of children and young people. In particular, the Compass project worked closely with the Mentoring Plus project, which was highly valued by children and young people and their parents/carers.
- (3) Home visits were routinely undertaken. Interventions were sensitive to the diverse needs of children and young people. Parents/carers were effectively involved in all cases.
- (4) All assessments had included an interview with the child or young person and their parents/carers. In all cases attention had been paid to the methods likely to be most effective.
- (5) All cases inspected had intervention plans. The majority clearly identified who would carry out the intervention and, in the main, they had been signed by the child or young person. Where diversity needs had been identified, plans were sensitive to these needs. A strong emphasis was placed on community integration and reducing the likelihood of offending behaviour in 89% of cases.
- (6) Interventions to address the likelihood of offending behaviour were delivered

in most cases. In all but one case inspected the intervention plan was completed within the appropriate timescale.

- (7) YISP workers demonstrated commitment to their work with the child or young person in all cases inspected, and in all but one case there was evidence that the workers had motivated and supported the child or young person throughout their engagement. In the same number of cases positive behaviour was reinforced by the case manager.
- (8) The year-on-year reduction in number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system was significantly above the YJB target of 5%. A reduction was achieved ahead of the target date.
- (9) In 2005, the Compass project was reviewed as part of the Children's Fund's evaluation. The consultant who carried out this review found that the sample of cases "indicated considerable improvements during the period of Compass involvement". This included progress in school attendance, behaviour and antisocial behaviour.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The YOT assessment of children and young people at risk of offending was undertaken using a paper version of the Onset tool. This tool did not include a template for the assessment and management of RoSH or vulnerability. As a result, in the cases inspected we found no formal process for making these assessments and no management plans to address vulnerability or RoSH issues. Although the YOT had considered, but ruled out as inadequate, an electronic alternative to Onset that would include RoSH and vulnerability assessment tools, they had not taken any action to address this gap.
- (2) As a result of the above, inspectors found that RoSH to others was not being accurately recorded and they had not taken any recorded action to address risk factors in cases inspected.
- (3) In only 13% of prevention cases inspected had a review of the Onset assessment informed the review of the intervention plan.

2.2 General criterion:

The health of children and young people who are at risk of offending is promoted by the work of the YOT and its partners.

Strengths:

- (1) Where physical health needs were indicated, referrals had been made appropriately in all but one case.
- (2) We found good evidence of interventions provided to children and young people at risk of offending aimed at improving their health and fitness,

including football, swimming, one-to-one sessions, and a fathers' group.

- (3) A representative from CAMHS was a member of the YISP.
- (4) The YOT had processes in place to ensure that consent forms in relation to sharing information were signed by children and young people and parents/carers.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The health needs of children and young people, particularly in relation to risk and vulnerability, were not routinely identified by YISP case managers. As a result, there was little evidence of action being taken to address these factors.
- (2) Inspectors found little evidence of the inclusion of emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical health needs recorded in Onset assessments.
- (3) There was limited recording of decisions by other agencies. As a result, case managers had difficulty evidencing when and why work had not been carried out.

2.3 General criterion:

Children and young people who are at risk of offending are safeguarded through the work of the YOT and its partners, to contribute to the promotion of their welfare and, where applicable, their protection.

Arrangements were in place to achieve an effective multi-agency approach to support vulnerable children and young people, including those at risk of offending. Staff had recently been trained in the use of the CAF. The YISP multi-agency panel approach had been adopted as the model for CAF panels by the area's CAF implementation group.

Strengths:

- (1) All prevention cases had their status with children's services checked early in the process and in all but one this was clearly recorded.
- (2) In all relevant cases there was evidence of liaison between the YISP worker and the children's services worker.
- (3) There was good liaison with parents/carers, and home visits were routinely undertaken to ensure that children and young people at risk of offending were safeguarded throughout the intervention.

Area for improvement:

- (1) The absence of an Onset vulnerability assessment tool and management plan

had led to children and young people not being accurately assessed in the cases inspected. This had adversely affected the management of children and young people's safeguarding factors.

2.4 General criterion:

Children and young people who are at risk of offending are enabled and encouraged to achieve their potential.

Strengths:

- (1) Where there was an assessed need, in all but one case, referrals were made to education provision, leading to an improvement in services for the child or young person.
- (2) In all cases the preventative service had helped to ensure that the child or young person was supported in accessing local services.
- (3) Positive, timely and purposeful home visits were carried out throughout interventions. Good levels of support and engagement with parents/carers to assist children and young people to access statutory mainstream education were evident.

Conclusion: These criteria are assessed as **adequate**.

Work with children and young people who have offended

2.5 General criterion:

The YOT (or others on its behalf) undertake appropriate activities to prevent children and young people from reoffending.

The YOT had three police officers (two part-time and one full-time) working with the early interventions team. They undertook assessments of children and young people during the period of police bail. The YOT attended a final warning clinic that met fortnightly to review assessments and agree final warning assessments. It also had a part-time police officer linked to the ISSP team.

Strengths:

- (1) The majority of initial assessments were based on specific interviews with children and young people and their parents/carers, where appropriate. There was good identification of positive factors in the lives of children and young people where these existed. All but three initial assessments were completed on time in accordance with the national standard timescale.
- (2) In three-quarters of cases children and young people had been invited to

undertake a *What do you think?* self-assessment and in all but one of these cases the child or young person had completed it.

- (3) Diversity issues that could have hindered the work of the YOT were routinely explored with children and young people as part of the assessment process. Where issues were identified, suitable plans to minimise their impact had been made in all cases.
- (4) Clear arrangements with Avon and Somerset Police were in place to ensure that the YOT was aware of potential final warnings. There was also an agreement between the YOT and the local court to ensure that those cases that had been escalated to appear before the court were adjourned for two weeks for a formal assessment and review by the YOT final warning clinic.
- (5) Final warnings were delivered within 20 working days of the decision to issue a final warning in all but one case, and interventions were delivered as part of the final warning in all but two cases.
- (6) All referral orders inspected had a written report that included a full assessment of risks and needs. All referral orders contained an intervention to prevent reoffending.
- (7) Youth offender panels met within 20 days of orders being made, and in all but one case the referral order contract started within five days of the panel meetings.
- (8) In over three-quarters of cases constructive interventions successfully challenged children and young people to accept responsibility for their offending behaviour.
- (9) In 81% of cases inspected where a court order had been made, the first appointment with the child or young person took place within the national standard timescale. Inspectors assessed that steps had been taken to ensure that the child or young person fully understood the requirements of the order in all cases, and in all but one case they understood the penalties should the order be breached.
- (10) In the majority of cases, the frequency of appointments was sufficient to meet the national standard requirements, any RoH and safeguarding issues and support the achievement of intervention plan objectives.
- (11) Judgements about the acceptability of absences were consistent and appropriate in all cases. Case managers demonstrated a strong commitment to engaging children and young people even when they were approaching breach proceedings.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Initial Asset assessments were judged to be of sufficient quality in only 34% of cases. We also found little evidence that reviews of Asset were of a sufficient quality.

- (2) RoSH was not consistently well assessed, with fewer than a third of relevant cases including a RoSH assessment and only half of assessments being judged as meeting a sufficient standard. This may partly have been an historical problem, as a number of cases pre-dated training undertaken within the YOT, but we did not find a sufficient and consistent level of knowledge or understanding of RoH and RoSH. This was coupled with a concern regarding the level of understanding of the MAPPA process.
- (3) As a result of the low level of appropriate RoSH assessments, there was also a low level of understanding of risk management plans and we found no plans completed among the cases inspected.
- (4) RoH to others was only reviewed in 38% of cases, no later than three months from the date of the previous assessment, and in only a third of cases following significant changes.
- (5) Inspectors had concerns regarding intervention plans. None of the plans assessed were aligned with those of other agencies, and in 38% of cases plans were not informed by an updated Asset assessment. Only 18% had been signed by children and young people or their parents/carers and the majority 63%, were not outcome-focused or sequenced appropriately. Only 36% included victim restorative processes and just over half included any victim awareness work. The content and sequencing of interventions subsequently delivered were also found to be insufficient in 73% of cases.
- (6) Case recording was not sufficiently detailed and tended not to identify practice such as victim awareness work, motivational work and concrete improvements for the children and young people in a consistent way.
- (7) Parents/carers had signed the intervention plans in only three of the 11 relevant cases. This was rather surprising given the otherwise positive work undertaken by the YOT with parents and carers.
- (8) Although the YOT had a highly regarded ISSP, the programme was not routinely evaluated to demonstrate effectiveness and value for money. Whilst feedback from service users had been gathered, it had not been collated and used to improve service delivery within the YOT.

2.6 General criterion:

The health of children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT.

Strengths:

- (1) The YOT had procedures in place to ensure that children and young people's health care status was recorded when a case was first opened. This task was undertaken by a member of the YOT's administration support staff and included the completion of consent forms in relation to sharing information

that were signed by children and young people and parents/carers.

- (2) We found good examples of YOT workers positively engaging children and young people with substance misuse issues. This included one child or young person becoming a voluntary adviser for Project 28.
- (3) Project 28 offered a variety of outreach services. The project was of particular value as it provided a service to children and young people with drug or alcohol problems that they could continue to access when their order had finished. It also provided services as a component of court orders, including the ISSP.
- (4) There was evidence, in the majority of cases, that children and young people with emotional, mental health and substance misuse issues were referred for specialist assessment within the YOT. In 73% of relevant cases, the YOT had made referrals for specialist assessment outside the YOT, for children and young people displaying emotional or mental health issues.
- (5) The YOT was able to refer children or young people exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour to the Keep Safe project, a multi-agency project managed from within CAMHS. Although the YOT had no SLA with the project, they had worked closely with Keep Safe and had contributed to the project's development.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The YOT had been without a health and substance misuse worker between October 2007 and mid-March 2008, when CAMHS appointed a nurse who specialised in mental health and substance misuse. At the time of the inspection the nurse had just started taking referrals. A backlog of about 74 children and young people with an Asset score of two or above, needing mental health assessment had been identified, but a similar exercise for substance misuse had not yet been carried out. It was unclear how these cases would be prioritised and worked with.
- (2) The involvement of the health worker in providing support and advice to case managers to facilitate robust assessments and appropriate interventions, was limited by the requirement for her to hold a generic caseload.
- (3) There was little evidence of the identification of physical health needs and the completion of physical health and substance misuse assessments. We identified that in the six cases where there was evidence of health needs only one had been referred for specialist assessment within the YOT. There was no evidence of any intervention having been delivered to a child or young person in relation to their physical health needs.
- (4) In only two of the seven cases where there was an assessed mental health need was a Screening Interview for Adolescents/Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents completed.

2.7 General criterion:

Children and young people who have offended are safeguarded through the work of the YOT to contribute to the promotion of their welfare and, where applicable, their protection.

The YOT, through the Chair of the YOT steering group and the YOT Manager, was represented on the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The CAF had only recently been extended to cover children and young people of 11 years and over.

Strengths:

- (1) In all inspected cases the child or young person's status with children's services had been checked for either the current or a recent order. In 92% of these cases that status was clearly recorded. In all relevant cases there had been good liaison between the YOT and children's services.
- (2) We found evidence in 85% of the cases inspected that the YOT had supported the child or young person to access local services.
- (3) There were three cases where it was considered necessary, due to the vulnerability of the child or young person, for the worker to make a referral to children's services. In all of these cases a referral had been made.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) There was evidence to suggest that the child or young person had been a risk to themselves in ten cases and at risk from others in 13 cases. However, in these cases no vulnerability action plan had been produced to reduce the identified needs.
- (2) We found some confusion among case managers as to when a vulnerability action plan should be produced. In a number of cases the failure to produce a vulnerability action plan had led to a lack of direction. In just three out of nine such cases was there evidence that actions had been taken appropriate to the needs of the case.
- (3) The lack of local authority accommodation places within the Bath and North East Somerset area resulted in children and young people who have offended being placed some distance from their homes. In one case inspected this had contributed to the child or young person committing further offences in an attempt to return home.

2.8 General criterion:

Children and young people who have offended are enabled and encouraged to achieve their potential.

The YOT had 0.7 full-time equivalent ETE workers and 0.2 full-time equivalent Connexions workers, plus the services of an educational psychologist for half a day each week. The January 2008 school census showed that 7.88% of the school population was identified as being from the BME community, compared to 2.8% of the wider population recorded in the 2001 census figures.

Strengths:

- (1) There were only two cases in the inspection sample where the child or young person had a statement of special educational needs. In both of these cases the YOT-linked educational psychologist had made an assessment of the child or young person.
- (2) There was a clear procedure to refer children and young people for ETE support where there was an Asset score of two or above for ETE needs. All other new cases were reviewed monthly to identify ETE need.
- (3) In most relevant cases there was evidence that an intervention related to their identified need was offered to the child or young person by the education worker.
- (4) The YOT was actively involved in the development of area placement and support panels, the multi-agency panels supported by the specialist behaviour services. These panels had led to a reduction in the number of children and young people permanently excluded from school from 45 in 2005/2006 to four in 2007/2008.
- (5) Where referrals for specialist assessment outside the YOT were made for children and young people over statutory school age, the required services were provided in all but one case.
- (6) ETE staff were committed to supporting children and young people to access learning and earning opportunities. Connexions workers attached to the YOT were well informed about the training and employment opportunities available. There were good examples of work with other agencies to meet children and young people's ETE needs, including Connexions, specialist behaviour, education psychology and Children Missing Education services.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Asset assessments were not used to drive intervention planning and, as a result, attention was not paid to the methods likely to be most effective with each child or young person.
- (2) Young people above statutory school age were not screened for learning

styles or assessed for basic skills, literacy and numeracy.

- (3) A significant number of children and young people above school age were not engaged in 16 hours of ETE each week.
- (4) ETE work was not clearly recorded by case managers or specialist education staff within the YOT. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the ETE provision had yet to be fully implemented.

Conclusion: These criteria are assessed as **adequate**.

Work with parents/carers

2.9 General criterion:

Parents/carers are supported in addressing their children's antisocial and offending behaviour.

A parenting group, Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities was organised by the YOT parenting worker and run by caseworkers from the YOT and children's services. The programme had been recently evaluated with some positive outcomes reported.

Strengths:

- (1) Parents/carers had been made aware of the requirements of interventions undertaken by children and young people in all cases and were kept informed of their progress in 95% of cases.
- (2) The active engagement of parents/carers in their child or young person's supervision was facilitated by the YOT or partner agency in 95% of cases.
- (3) Home visits were carried out routinely and used as a means of maintaining contact with parents/carers. Caseworkers ensured that work with parents/carers took account of their work and domestic needs by being flexible with both the timing and the venue used.
- (4) In all relevant cases parenting skills had been assessed. For those parents/carers referred for parenting intervention, whether voluntarily or by order of the court, parenting skills were assessed in a timely manner and an intervention was proposed based on an assessment of need, including diversity needs in most cases.
- (5) The delivered interventions promoted effective parenting in relation to the parents/carers' ability to care and control in all cases, and promoted the welfare of their children and young people in all but one of the cases.
- (6) Parents/carers felt that the interventions offered had enabled them to become more effective, and had made a positive impact on their children and

young people's behaviour.

- (7) All of the Asset assessments completed on children and young people subject to a custodial sentence involved direct work with their parents/carers. This included encouraging parents/carers to maintain contact with their children and young people during their period in custody.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Although parents/carers were encouraged by the YOT to visit their children and young people during their custodial sentence, there was evidence in only half of the cases that parents/carers attended the planning meetings or final reviews, and there was no evidence that parents/carers had seen or signed plans.

Conclusion: This criterion is assessed as **good**.

Outcomes of work with children and young people in the community

2.10 General criterion:

The YOT promotes consultation with service users about the services they receive, and this information is used to improve outcomes.

The YOT had an annual improvement plan which reviewed all aspects of children and young people's engagement with the YOT and its partner agencies. The plan included clear tasks and SMART objectives including outcomes and review dates.

Strengths:

- (1) The YISP Compass project had been engaged with the Children's Society to attain the Children's Charter Mark since October 2007. This had included the Children's Society interviewing YISP children and young people and reviewing the *Over to You* form completed by them. This had resulted in the YOT reviewing and changing its Compass keyworker guidance.
- (2) In all Onset cases, the child or young person and parent/carer had been involved in the initial assessment and, where appropriate, specific and individual needs identified by the parent/carer had been addressed. In all Asset cases the child or young person had been involved in the initial assessment and parents/carers had been involved in almost all cases.
- (3) The YOT had arranged for the local Supporting People team to meet children and young people to hear their views and experiences of being homeless or in need of housing support services. This information was to be used by the Supporting People team to inform future accommodation strategies.
- (4) The YOT had an established and accessible complaints procedure in place and

service users interviewed were aware of how to complain.

- (5) The YOT endeavoured to involve children and young people in the process of recruiting new members of staff. This included interviewing candidates prior to their appointment.
- (6) Five children and young people known to the YOT recently participated in an IYSS conference and contributed to the plans to develop future services for children and young people in the local authority area.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Although, *What do you think?* questionnaires were completed in the majority of cases, there was little evidence that they were used to help construct intervention plans. Children and young people did not often sign the intervention plan or receive a copy so they could refer to the work planned or see the progress made.
- (2) Consultation and feedback information was not systematically used to inform future service delivery.

2.11 General criterion:

The YOT demonstrates positive outcomes in its work with children and young people in the community.

Strengths:

- (1) In all but one of the nine prevention cases inspected, children and young people had cooperated with the requirements of the intervention. In all cases there had been no convictions, cautions or final warnings since the start of the programme.
- (2) Resources were used effectively in eight of the nine prevention cases, with evidence of positive changes in attitude and behaviour in the vast majority of these cases.
- (3) The Asset assessments of children and young people who had offended had been rescored in most cases and in almost two-thirds of cases the most recent score showed an improvement over the initial score.
- (4) In almost three-quarters of cases children and young people who had offended complied with the terms of their orders.
- (5) Consultation with children and young people as part of the inspection process indicated that all felt they had been treated with respect by the YOT. Over three-quarters felt the YOT had helped them and all but one child or young person felt they were less likely to offend as a result.

- (6) YJB figures showed a year-on-year fall in the number of new entrants into the criminal justice system, with the YOT exceeding the YJB target of a 5% reduction in advance of the target date. With a reduction in reoffending in excess of -25% in the previous quarter.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) There was less progress with those children and young people who had already offended and correspondingly fewer positive changes in attitudes and behaviour in those cases inspected.
- (2) Although in the majority of cases there was overall progress against the first two priority objectives for children and young people who had offended, there was a demonstrable improvement in attitudes and behaviour in less than half the cases inspected. Victim awareness was assessed as improved in less than a quarter of cases.
- (3) In around two-thirds of all cases inspected there was no evidence of a reduction in factors linked to risk of safeguarding. Inspectors assessed that safeguarding factors had been managed effectively in only a third of all cases.
- (4) The YOT had no systematic processes to carry out routine analysis of outcomes for children and young people who offend.

Conclusion: These criteria are assessed as **adequate**.

3. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO CUSTODIAL SENTENCES

3.1 General criterion:

The YOT (or others on its behalf), undertake appropriate activities during the custodial phase of the sentence to prevent children and young people from reoffending.

Bath & North East Somerset YOT had a relatively small number of cases sentenced to custody in the period prior to the inspection and only two in custody at the time of the inspection. As a result, it was only possible to inspect eight cases for this section. The majority of children and young people served their custodial sentence at HMYOI Ashfield, which is within an hour's drive of Bath.

Strengths:

- (1) In all but one case the initial Asset assessment was completed in accordance with the national standard timescales and subsequently rescored. All assessments were completed following at least one interview with the child or young person. In all appropriate cases parents/carers were involved in completing the assessment and the assessment reflected specific and individual needs identified by parents/carers.
- (2) In all but one case the RoSH had been accurately assessed. All of the risk classifications were assessed as accurate.
- (3) Race and ethnicity details had been accurately recorded in the majority of cases. Where diversity issues had been identified, plans had been put in place to minimise their impact in all but one relevant case.
- (4) Joint work had been undertaken between the YOT and the secure establishment staff to address mental health, alcohol and substance misuse needs, as identified in Asset assessments. In all cases joint working was delivered to plan and achieved within a reasonable timescale.
- (5) There was evidence of joint work between the YOT and the secure establishment staff to address ETE needs, including statutory and post-16 training and employment.
- (6) There was evidence in all but two cases that the YOT worker had attended and contributed to the initial training plan meetings, resulting in most plans being completed within the national standard timescale, with the child or young person having seen and endorsed it. All but two plans clearly outlined

who would deliver the interventions. The interventions planned addressed the likelihood of reoffending and community reintegration in seven of the eight cases.

- (7) YOT workers were proactive in the assessment and monitoring of accommodation needs.
- (8) Parents/carers had been encouraged to keep in contact with and visit their children and young people. This included practical assistance with transport.
- (9) In seven of the eight cases the case manager attended and actively contributed to the final review meeting.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Initial Asset assessments were of sufficient quality in fewer than half the eight cases. They did not consistently draw on a range of sources. Parents/carers were only interviewed in three cases, and contact with the education/training provider only occurred in two cases.
- (2) In fewer than half the cases *What do you think?* self-assessment forms had been completed by children and young people in custody.
- (3) Full attention had been paid to the methods likely to be most effective with the child or young person in only three of the eight cases.
- (4) Whilst the screening of RoSH had been completed in all but one case, inspectors assessed that in the vast majority of cases the RoSH had not been completed to a sufficient standard.
- (5) Although there was only one case that had been assessed as a high or very high RoSH to others, this classification had not been communicated to staff within the secure establishment. In only one of the two MAPPA cases had the classification been communicated to all staff involved with the children and young people.
- (6) Inspectors assessed that in five cases the RoSH assessment indicated the need for a risk management plan to be completed although plans had only been completed in two of these cases. It was assessed that neither plan was comprehensive and only one was completed at the same time as the RoSH.
- (7) In all but one case the views of teachers or ETE providers were not included at the initial planning meeting, and the health issues were not included in any of the training plans.

3.2 General criterion:

Children and young people are safeguarded through the work of the YOT during the custodial phase of the sentence to contribute to the promotion of their welfare and, where applicable, their protection.

Although the number of children and young people serving custodial sentences was small, a significant number of those within the case sample showed evidence of current or previous RoH to themselves (63%). A high proportion had current or previous reckless behaviour that placed them at risk of hurting themselves.

Strengths:

- (1) The YOT had checked the status of every child subject to a detention and training order with children's services at the commencement of the order, or in relation to an earlier sentence, and this was clearly recorded in all but one case.
- (2) YOT case managers carried out an extra monthly welfare visit to HMYOI Ashfield in between attending the statutory meetings.
- (3) Only one case required liaison and joint working between the YOT and children's services. In this case, liaison took place and the child or young person's allocated social worker attended the final review meeting.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) In almost half the cases the YOT did not provide the secure establishment with an up-to-date core Asset assessment covering vulnerability assessment and known health needs, within the required timescale. With the exception of a post-court report, other relevant assessments and information were sent to secure establishments in fewer than half of all cases. It was of particular concern that there was no evidence that health and education plans were sent within the required timescale.
- (2) Vulnerability action plans had not been produced for any of the children and young people who needed them, and consideration of staying safe was integrated into fewer than half of the training plans.

3.3 General criterion:

The YOT (or others on its behalf), undertake appropriate activities during the community phase of the sentence, to prevent children and young people from reoffending.

Strengths:

- (1) In all cases the YOT provided a timely induction for children and young people released from custody.

- (2) The frequency of appointments during the community phase of the order met the requirements of the national standard. Where appropriate, additional contacts to meet the needs of the individual were undertaken in nearly all cases.
- (3) Home visits were carried out and repeated as necessary in all cases. Where possible, parents/carers had been fully engaged with the work of the YOT to reintegrate the child or young person into the family and community.
- (4) In all cases, the case manager monitored attendance across all interventions delivered with the child or young person. Judgements about the acceptability of absences were consistent, and effective action taken to ensure compliance was largely carried out within the required timescales.
- (5) In nearly all cases there was evidence that the YOT worker had demonstrated a strong commitment to working with the child or young person.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Although intervention plans were reviewed in line with national standards in the majority of cases, in only one case was there evidence that plans had been reviewed either every three months or at the end of the order.
- (2) In only three of the eight cases was there evidence that a review of the Asset assessment had informed the intervention plan.
- (3) RoSH to others was reviewed within ten days of release from custody in less than half of all cases. There was no evidence of subsequent reviews, either at the three month stage or following any significant incidents.
- (4) There is a requirement, under national standards, for YOTs to provide specialist health services to children and young people released from custody with assessed emotional, mental health, substance misuse and physical health needs. During the inspection we found evidence that services were only being provided to 20% of emotional & mental health cases, 29% of substance misuse cases and 25% of physical health cases.
- (5) In only 25% of cases had the individual learning plan continued to follow the child or young person after release.
- (6) In only two of the eight cases was there evidence that numeracy and literacy were assessed within ten days of release.
- (7) Constructive interventions successfully challenged the child or young person to accept responsibility for their offending behaviour and its consequences in only one case, and in only three cases did work in the community build sufficiently on activities started in custody. In only three of the eight cases were interventions delivered that were sensitive to diversity issues.

3.4 General criterion:

The YOT demonstrates positive outcomes in its work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences.

Strengths:

- (1) Children and young people and their parents/carers were appreciative of the support they were given by the YOT. They felt that staff had helped them to keep in touch with each other during custodial sentences. Most felt that their worker was supportive and had kept in contact well.
- (2) Resources were allocated consistently to RoH to others and likelihood of reoffending in all but one of the cases, and consistently to the risk of safeguarding in all but two of the cases inspected.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) In only one of the six relevant cases was there evidence of a reduction in factors linked to safeguarding. We assessed that safeguarding factors had not been managed effectively in any of the relevant cases.
- (2) Since the start of the community phase of the sentence, half of the children and young people had been convicted of a further offence. The same proportion had complied with the requirements of their order.
- (3) Inspectors found no demonstrable benefit to the community as a result of the offender's order in any of the eight custody cases assessed.
- (4) Although Asset had been rescored in the majority of cases, in only one case did the most recent score show an improvement over the initial score.
- (5) There was no evidence of progress against any of the three priority criminogenic factors associated with the likelihood of reoffending, as assessed in the initial Asset at the start of the order.
- (6) In five of the eight cases attention had not been given to long-term community reintegration, and in six it was assessed that resources had not been used effectively to achieve the planned outcomes.

Conclusion: These criteria are assessed as **adequate**.

4. VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

4.1 General criterion:

Victims of children and young people who have offended feel that they have been assisted by the intervention of the YOT in feeling safer and achieving closure.

Strengths:

- (1) The police had informed the YOT of victim contact details in accordance with the national standards in three-quarters of cases.
- (2) All victims were contacted by the YOT within the required timescale both by letter and telephone. Victims were also offered a home visit if requested.
- (3) Although there were only a small number of victims who agreed to attend youth offender panel meetings, there was evidence in all cases that the YOT had made suitable arrangements to allow victims to contribute to the panel and support the victim during and after the panel.
- (4) The YOT had a wide range of community reparation programmes available. In those cases where reparation was undertaken, there was evidence that it commenced within three months of the order being made.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Although the YOT had processes in place to ensure that contact was made with victims within the required timescale, there was evidence in only half the cases that the victim had been invited to participate in the restorative justice process related to the offence.
- (2) Inspectors found little evidence that an assessment of the victim's needs had been timely or of sufficient quality.
- (3) Case managers interviewed during the inspection reported having insufficient time to undertake reparation work with children and young people. This included cases where reparation was a requirement of the order. Data from the inspection showed that in 78% of cases inspected no reparation had been undertaken.
- (4) There was evidence of victim awareness work, including writing letters to victims, being undertaken with children and young people in only half of cases. Inspectors found that in 67% of cases there was no victim awareness work carried out that took account of the child or young person's or victim's

needs.

Conclusion: This criterion is assessed as **adequate**.

5. MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Leadership and planning

5.1 General criterion:

The Management Board works actively with others, including the YOT Manager, in an integrated way to maximise the likelihood of improving outcomes for children and young people.

The YOT Management Board had retained the name of steering group since the inception of the YOT. The steering group reported directly to the RAG.

Strengths:

- (1) The YOT was fully incorporated into the BANES Young People and Family Support services with the YOT Manager having a key role within the developing integrated youth support services. The Chair of the YOT steering group was a full member of the RAG.
- (2) The YSG and RAG had ensured that the Youth Justice Plan was integrated with the Community Safety Plan and other relevant children and young people's plans.
- (3) The reduction of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system was a priority in the Children and Young People's Plan. This helped to link the YOTs prevention work to the wider corporate prevention activities.
- (4) The YOT had a performance group that met monthly. The Performance Management Group scrutinised the performance returns to the YJB on a line-by-line basis. It had a thorough awareness of the YOT's performance and had steered improvements in the YOT's target-driven performance over past years.
- (5) The YOT Manager was an influential member of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The YOT also contributed to a wide range of other multi-agency initiatives such as those relating to CAMHS, MAPPA, police, the Local Criminal Justice Board and antisocial behaviour.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) From an inspection of the notes from YSG meetings and from interviews with individual members of the steering group, there was evidence of a lack of decision-making at these meetings. Many of the actions were taken to the appropriate representation at RAG level.

- (2) Attendance at YSG meetings by some members was poor, particularly the PCT representative. There was no representation on the group from some important agencies, in particular from the courts. We were also concerned that representation on the YSG was not always at the appropriate senior level to make decisions.
- (3) There was no induction process for new members of the YSG or any development arrangements for YSG members to build relationships and knowledge.
- (4) There was no diversity lead on the steering group, and diversity did not have a high profile on the agenda for YSG meetings.

Partnership and resources

5.2 General criterion:

Partner organisations and the YOT work together effectively to protect the public, reduce antisocial and offending behaviour and deliver positive outcomes for children and young people.

Strengths:

- (1) Protocols and SLAs were in place or in preparation to coordinate the delivery of services. A procedure had been established to ensure that they were regularly reviewed and updated.
- (2) The new IYSS had taken responsibility for promoting closer joint working to address children and young people's substance misuse.
- (3) The YOT had written protocols with a number of key partnerships, including Project 28, the local specialist provider of drugs and alcohol services for children and young people, which were reviewed annually. The project was highly valued by children and young people and parents/carers.
- (4) We were pleased to see an above average contribution from the PCT, which contributed greatly to the YOT's ability to meet the needs of children and young people who offend.
- (5) Avon & Somerset Police had two full-time and one part-time officer seconded to the YOT. Their core responsibility was to manage and supervise all final warnings and make initial contact with victims. The officers were committed and resourceful in their work to divert children and young people from prosecution, completing comprehensive assessments and interventions on a risk-based approach. The police also linked a part-time officer into the YOT's ISSP team. These officers also managed referral orders.
- (6) A protocol between the YOT and BANES PCT specified arrangements in the event of a seconded post being unfilled for a lengthy period of time or long

periods of sickness. This included alternative support arrangements from the relevant health service.

- (7) There were effective strategic and operational relationships with youth court sentencers through a variety of meetings and training events.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The YOT had a very enthusiastic and committed accommodation worker but, due to a lack of 'move on' provision in the BANES area, some children and young people were placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. Although the YOT was represented on the Supporting People core strategy group, it had no protocols or SLA relating to accommodation for children and young people who had offended.
- (2) Partnership agreements between the YOT and Avon & Somerset Police did not specify arrangements to cover seconded posts unfilled for a lengthy period of time or in cases of long-term absence. There was concern that when a seconded officer was on maternity leave her post would be left uncovered. Although it was noted that long-term absences had been covered previously.
- (3) Although there was a detailed protocol between the YOT and Avon & Somerset Probation Area, the section covering children and young people subject to Community Punishment & Rehabilitation Orders where the community punishment element was delivered by the probation area lacked detail. In particular, it contained no arrangements for notifying the YOT of hours completed or failure to comply with the requirements of the community punishment element. There were no details included on arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of children and young people undertaking community punishment alongside adult offenders.
- (4) The YOT had no process for routinely collecting and disseminating health performance data that efficiently monitored outcomes and demonstrated how the health input to the YOT had led to a reduction in offending behaviour.

Staff supervision, development and training

5.3 General criterion:

Positive outcomes for children and young people are enhanced by effective staff.

Strengths:

- (1) Two-thirds of case workers stated that their managers' professional management approach was excellent, with all other staff stating that managers' approach was sufficient. All managers modelled positive leadership behaviour, with a third of staff recording it as excellent.

- (2) Staff interviewed as part of the inspection process felt that they were well informed about the policies and procedures of the YOT. Good use was made of electronic communication systems such as e-mail and the intranet.
- (3) Staff reported receiving supervision of a sufficient standard. Six members of staff described their supervision as excellent.
- (4) All staff reported having received an annual appraisal in the past 12 months. Nearly all thought that the appraisal was clearly linked to the YOT Business Plan.
- (5) Training and development needs were said by staff to be well met in all cases and three staff described training and development as being excellent. The YOT had a clear training plan and procedures were in place for the induction of new staff.
- (6) The YOT had a commitment to ensure that staff had the opportunity to undertake the Professional Certificate in Effective Practice and six current members of staff had completed the course.
- (7) All youth offender panel volunteers reported feeling satisfied with support, training and supervision arrangements. They had bi-monthly group supervision, and all felt that the training they had received had equipped them to do the job. This included a shadowing element where new panel members observed panel meetings before finally taking on the role fully.
- (8) Volunteers were appropriately trained. Their training needs were assessed using the same process used for employed staff. In addition to the core volunteer training programme, they had accessed wider YOT training and benefited from regular group supervision.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The YOT was small with limited resources and capacity appeared to be a significant issue. Resources were spread quite thinly across some areas, which required most YOT staff to multi-task. Any long-term absences, including annual or sick leave, left the YOT vulnerable as already stretched staff also tried to cover for these absences. This had been a significant issue over the past two years and had impacted on a number of the cases inspected.
- (2) Although the YOT had a procedure to ensure that line managers quality-assured case management as part of each supervision session, this had clearly not happened routinely and had been insufficiently rigorous.
- (3) MAPPA structures and processes were poorly understood. This issue needed to be addressed initially at management level. Many staff considered that if a case was being managed by a single agency, then it was by default a Level 1 MAPPA case irrespective of the RoSH assessment. Whilst MAPPA is complex, there was a clear need for training and monitoring of performance on this

subject, especially as it would be unlikely that many staff would have a lot of involvement from which to develop expertise.

Conclusion: These criteria are assessed as **adequate**.

Appendix 1: Contextual information

Area

Bath & North East Somerset YOT was located in the south west of England and, as a single YOT, covered the Bath & North East Somerset local authority area.

The area had a population of 169,040 as measured in the Census 2001, 9.6% of which were aged 10-17 years old. This was slightly lower than the average for England, which was 10.4%.

The population of Bath & North East Somerset was predominantly white (97.2%). The population with a black and minority ethnic heritage (2.8%) was significantly below the average for England of 8.7%.

Reported crime levels for children and young people aged 10-17 years old across the area at 58.2 per 1,000 were above the average for England of 53.

The proportion of Looked After Children aged ten and sanctioned for an offence committed whilst Looked After was 10% in Bath & North East Somerset, which was slightly above the average for England of 9%.

YOT

The YOT boundaries were co-terminus with those of Avon & Somerset probation area and Avon & Somerset police area. Two PCTs, Bath & North East Somerset Primary Care Trust and Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust, covered the Bath & North East Somerset area.

The Youth Justice Plan 2007/2008 showed that the YOT had 60 staff in post including volunteers. 74% of staff were female and 10% had a black or minority ethnic heritage.

The work of the YOT was based in one main office located in Bath.

YJB performance data

The YJB summary of overall YOT performance available at the time of the inspection for the period to December 2007 gave Bath & North East Somerset a score of 3 on a scale where 5 is the maximum. This was above the national and regional performance, but slightly below that of comparable YOTs.

Performance on reducing reoffending received a score of 3, which was slightly below that of its family but higher than the regional and national average.

Appendix 2: Inspection data

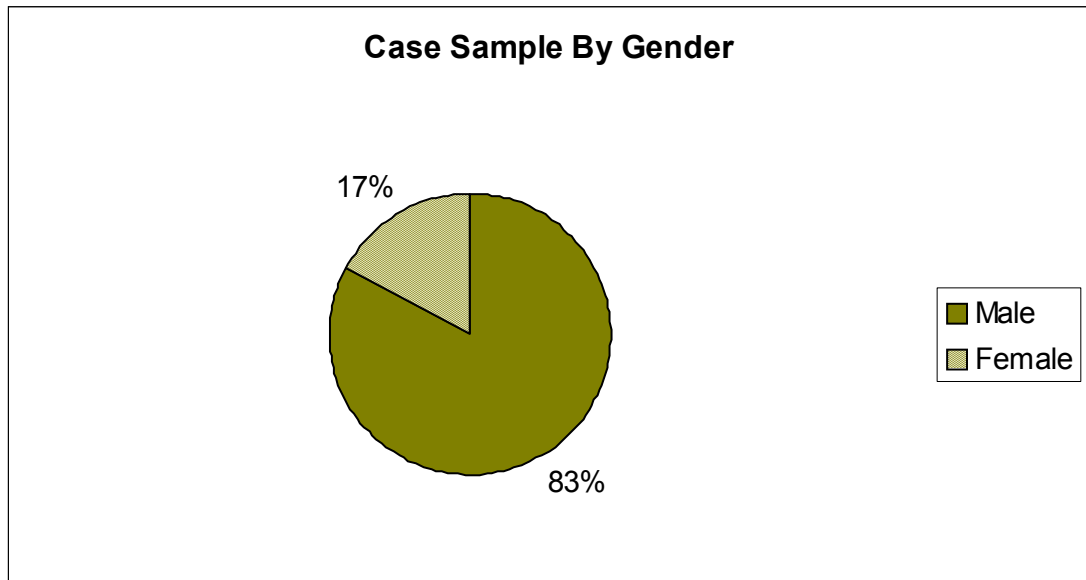
Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in April 2008 and during a contribution to the Bath & North East Somerset Joint Area Review in May 2008.

The inspection consisted of:

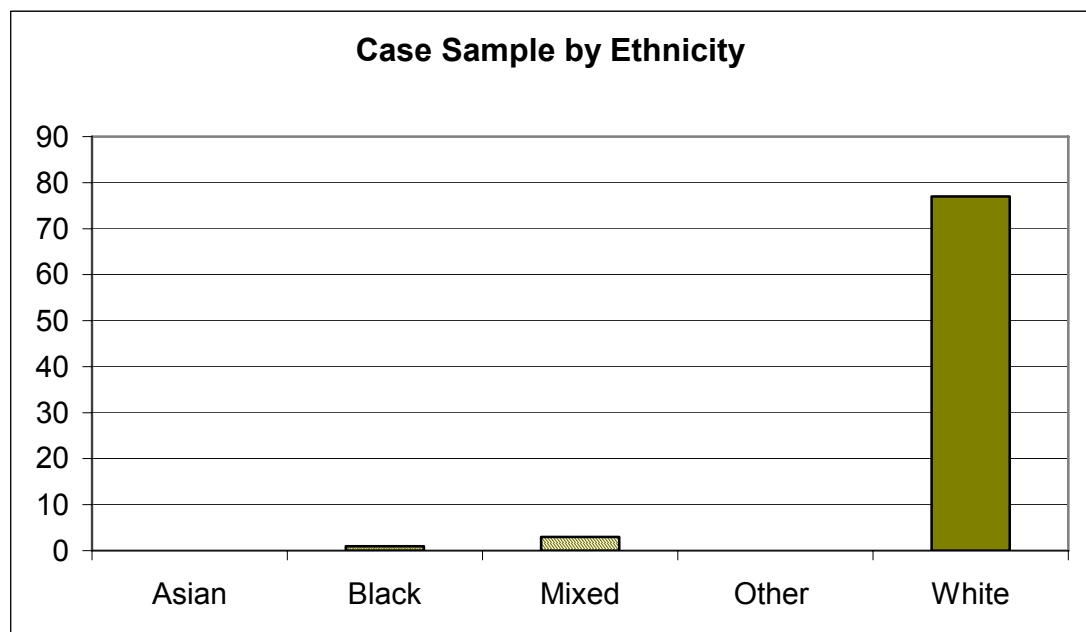
- ◇ evidence in advance
- ◇ examination of YJB performance data and assessments
- ◇ examination of practice in a sample of cases, normally in conjunction with the case manager or other representative, as follows:
 - 9 prevention files
 - 9 final warnings
 - 10 first tier penalties (referral orders, reparation orders)
 - 11 community sentences
 - 8 custodial cases
- ◇ interviews and questionnaire responses from children and young people, parents/carers, and victims
- ◇ interviews with children and young people in custody
- ◇ meetings with staff, managers and partners.

Data charts

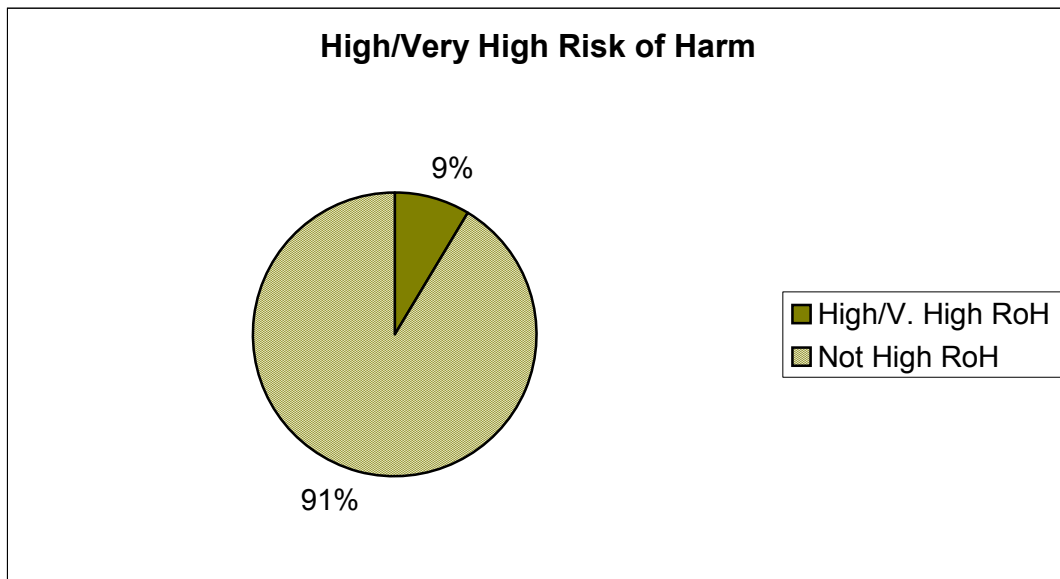
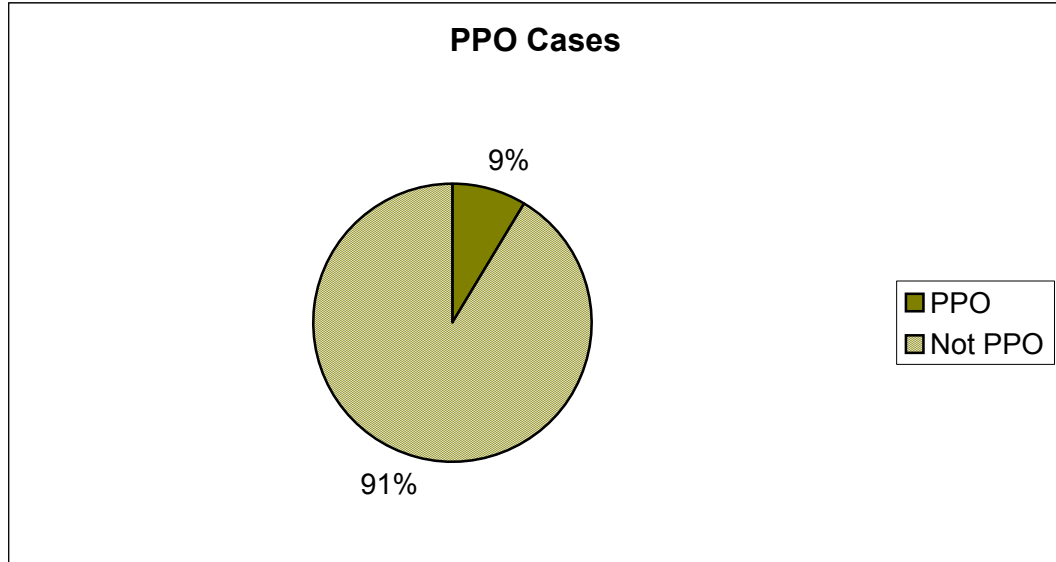
The chosen sample takes into consideration the percentage of girls or young women in contact with the YOT. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



The chosen sample takes into consideration the percentage of black and minority ethnic children or young people in contact with the YOT. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



The chosen sample includes a number of high RoH cases and ISSP/PPO cases. The numbers included depend on the size of the YOT/YOT involved, and range from six to 12 cases per sample.



Appendix 3: Joint inspection arrangements

The joint YOT inspection programme began in September 2003 and is the first full inspection programme to examine the work of the YOTs. It has been implemented over four phases, covering all YOTs in England and Wales over a five year period. From September 2005, the findings in England have contributed to the Joint Area Reviews of children's services (led by Ofsted) and the Corporate Assessment of local authority services (led by the Audit Commission).

Appendix 4: Role of HMI Probation and code of practice

HMI Probation is an independent Inspectorate, funded by the Ministry of Justice and reporting directly to the Secretary of State. Our purpose is to:

- report to the Secretary of State on the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public, whoever undertakes this work under the auspices of the National Offender Management Service or the Youth Justice Board
- report on the effectiveness of the arrangements for this work, working with other Inspectorates as necessary
- contribute to improved performance by the organisations whose work we inspect
- contribute to sound policy and effective service delivery, especially in public protection, by providing advice and disseminating good practice, based on inspection findings, to Ministers, officials, managers and practitioners
- promote actively race equality and wider diversity issues, especially in the organisations whose work we inspect
- contribute to the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system, particularly through joint work with other inspectorates.

HMI Probation aims to achieve its purpose and to meet the Government's principles for inspection in the public sector by:

- working in an honest, professional, fair and polite way
- reporting and publishing inspection findings and recommendations for improvement in good time and to a good standard
- promoting race equality and wider attention to diversity in all aspects of our work, including within our own employment practices and organisational processes
- for the organisations whose work we are inspecting, keeping to a minimum the amount of extra work arising as a result of the inspection process.

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*

<http://www.inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>