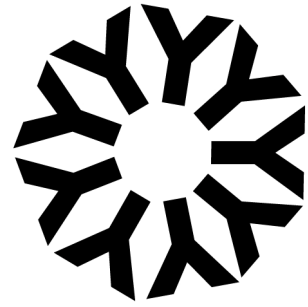


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Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:
Blackburn with Darwen
Youth Justice Service

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2009

Foreword

The inspection of Blackburn with Darwen YJS 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.

The YJS was located within children's services and line managed by the Strategic Head of Children's Services who was the Chair for the recently re-constituted YJS Board. We found clear links to the Local Strategic Partnership Board and to both the Children and Young People's Trust and the Community Safety Partnership. The Board's YJS improvement plan had recently been agreed and actions had recognised many of the issues contained in our inspection findings.

We found a motivated and well-supported staff group willing to positively engage with the challenges presented by their work with children and young people. However, Risk of Harm management work could be strengthened further, with more effective structural links to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

January 2009

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Glossary

ABC	Acceptable behaviour contracts
ADHD	Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder
ASBO	AntiSocial Behaviour Order
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
Estyn	Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, training and education
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
LoR	Likelihood of Reoffending
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
Onset	Assessment tool developed by YJB for prevention cases
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PPO	Prolific and other Priority Offender
PSR	Pre-sentence report
PYO	Persistent young offender
RMP	Risk management plan
RoH	Risk of Harm
RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SLA	Service level agreement
SQUIFA	Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents (Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for YOT workers)
YIP	Youth Inclusion Programme
YISP	Youth Inclusion Support Panel
YJB	Youth Justice Board (National level)
YJS	Youth Justice Service
YOS/T	Youth Offending Service/Team

Summary

Criteria	Judgement
Work in the courts	3
Work with children and young people in the community	
Work with children and young people at risk of offending	1
Work with children and young people who have offended	2
Work with parents/carers	3
Outcomes of work with children and young people in the community	2
Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences	2
Victims and restorative justice	2
Management and leadership	3

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 YJS was proactive in identifying and responding to children and young people who were at risk of secure or custodial remands. It had a range of services and utilised these effectively including the bail Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme. Performance on the reduction of the use of secure remands had improved.
- ◆ Proper attention was paid to safeguarding issues at court and where children or young people were remanded in custody or to a secure unit. All those remanded were assessed within 24 hours, and safeguarding information accompanied them all to custody. Children's social care services attended monthly vulnerability meetings with the YJS.
- ◆ There was an experienced, well-prepared court team with good communication between the YJS and the court. The YJS was recognised as delivering a quality service that had the confidence of sentencers. However, there were no processes in place for systematic feedback from the court on the quality of individual reports or from the YJS about the outcomes achieved with children and young people.
- ◆ Court reports were generally timely and of sufficient quality. However, they often did not sufficiently address the maturity of the child or young person with regard to their understanding of the seriousness of the offence.
- ◆ There were a number of examples of child-friendly approaches to court reports to help younger children and young people with disabilities to contribute to, and understand what was being said about them in the report.

Work with children and young people in the community

- ◆ For children and young people who were at risk of offending there were differential arrangements. Whilst the Youth Inclusion Support Panel was a clearly commissioned service within the YJS, the Youth Inclusion Panel at Mill Hill was not part of the structure of the YJS.
- ◆ Most Onset assessments had included input from the child or young person and their parents/carer. There was poor identification of health issues and improvements were required in assessment, recording, referral and delivery of services across the health spectrum of needs. Referral to children's social care services was not made in half of the cases where this was necessary.
- ◆ The initial Asset assessments for children and young people who had offended were not of sufficient quality in more than half of the cases. Few Risk of Serious Harm assessments had been completed and improvements were needed in case reviews and planning. Interventions were only likely to address Risk of Harm in half of the cases.
- ◆ In the majority of safeguarding cases the YJS worker had made a referral to children's social care services where this was necessary. Improvements were required in the delivery of services to address health needs.

- ◆ The YJS generally supported children and young people back into statutory mainstream education but improvements were required in its work with those with LDD. Children and young people over the age of 16 were well served within the YJS, but fared less well when referred outside the YJS to other services.

Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences

- ◆ Assets were completed and sent to the secure establishment in good time. However, they were not considered to be of sufficient quality in most cases. There was evidence that this had been recognised by managers and steps taken to improve these. Improvements were needed in the screening of the Risk of Harm and in the completion of the Risk of Serious Harm assessment.
- ◆ The YJS contributed to the majority of the planning process required whilst the child or young person was in custody. Initial training plans were timely and reviewed appropriately. Interventions were unlikely to include staying safe and victim awareness. However, in most cases they included likelihood of reoffending and community reintegration.
- ◆ Emotional and mental health issues and substance misuse were generally identified but not all health needs were addressed. The frequency of appointments met the national standard and the requirements of the case. All employment, training and education needs identified had been provided with a specialist service. However, few individual learning plans had continued following release.
- ◆ Most children and young people had complied with the requirements of their order and attention had been given by the YJS to community reintegration. However, there were some poor outcomes and few benefits to the community were identified, with more than half convicted of another offence during the community stage of the order.

Victims and restorative justice

- ◆ Victim feedback was generally quite positive and victim safety had been given appropriate priority in the majority of cases. In many cases victims had been invited to engage in restorative processes but there were very few examples where this had happened.
- ◆ Where the child or young person had been involved in community reparation, this was usually undertaken within the appropriate national standard timescale. There was a limited range of community reparation projects available, although this had been recognised and plans were in place to increase these.

Management and leadership

- ◆ The YJS Board had a good range of representation from across the local authority and its partners at a senior level. The membership included key

strategic representatives as well as operational specialists and core funding bodies.

- ◆ The Board had established an improvement plan for the YJS in July 2008. There was a commitment to establish a three year plan building on the one year plan and the findings from this inspection.
- ◆ Performance was monitored by the Board and performance information was used in local planning and commissioning decisions to hold management to account.
- ◆ There were a number of well-developed partnerships. However there was a shortfall in funding within the partnership with health. There were also difficulties with the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements structure in effectively including the YJS.
- ◆ Staff were generally well-trained, managed and supported and understood the policies and procedures of the YJS.

Recommendations

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

- (1) effective arrangements are established for including the YJS within Multi-Agency Probation Protection Arrangements representation (*Chair Lancashire MAPPA and Chair YJS Board*)
- (2) the YJS improvement plan is fully implemented (*YJS Board*)
- (3) there is improvement in outcomes for custody cases including more effective engagement with children and young people (*YJS manager, Young Offenders Institutions*)
- (4) there is an increase in the number of victims enabled to benefit from restorative processes (*YJS manager*)
- (5) all staff are conversant with and skilled in the use of the planning tools to record and review Risk of Serious Harm and vulnerability (*YJS manager*)
- (6) appropriate levels of health funding are agreed and established (*Chair YJS Board, Health representative on the YJS Board*)
- (7) continued performance improvement in the completion of Assets is achieved (*YJS manager*).

Next steps

An improvement plan addressing the recommendations should be submitted to HMI Probation for approval four weeks after the publication of this inspection report. Once agreed, the plan will be forwarded to the YJB to monitor its implementation.

Service users' perspective

Children and young people

Twenty-four children and young people completed a questionnaire for the inspection, of which ten questionnaires were interactive on computer software. The remainder were completed on paper, either independently or during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ During the first contact all knew why they had to come to the YJS and were given information about what would happen during their visits. They also received an explanation of what would happen if they missed appointments.
- ◇ Where they had had a PSR written about them five out of nine had seen the report before court. The content of the report had been explained in seven out of nine occasions.
- ◇ Seventeen out of 20 thought that the YJS was interested in helping them. The areas they felt the YJS had helped them in the most was understanding their offending, making better decisions, ETE and lifestyle. On the whole they thought the YJS had done its best to enable them to get the maximum benefit out of their sessions.
- ◇ The majority said that they got treated fairly and with respect by the YJS staff. However, 13 out of 20 did not know how to make a complaint if they needed to. The majority felt that it was easy or very easy to have a say in the way things were run in the YJS and make a difference.
- ◇ Those who had education or employment needs identified improvements in this area of their lives in nine out of 17 cases. In addition, improvements had been identified in seven out of 11 instances where there were health needs.
- ◇ Generally service users were either largely or completely satisfied with the service provided by the YJS. Most also thought that they would be less likely to offend as a result of their time with the YJS.

No interviews were conducted with children and young people in custody.

Parents/carers

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

- ◇ In general parents/carers found their first contact with the YJS helpful. In four out of six cases the YJS had explained what was available to them and their families.

- ◇ In the two cases where there had been a PSR, no one had seen it before court. However, both had the content of the report explained to them.
- ◇ In most cases they felt that their needs had been taken into account by the YJS and in four out of six cases they had been provided with enough information about sentences.
- ◇ Generally the YJS kept them informed about what they were doing with their children. In four out of six cases they were asked if they wanted or needed help with parenting. Two got help with this.
- ◇ Half felt things had got better as a result of their involvement with the YJS and four out of six felt that things had improved for their children as a result of their involvement. Half knew how to make a complaint about the YJS if they needed to. Overall satisfaction with the YJS was mixed, with two completely satisfied, one slightly disappointed and one not at all satisfied. Two of the respondents did not comment.

Victims

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

- ◇ Victims said that their first contact with the YJS was helpful. Staff had explained why they were being contacted and what could be offered to them by the YJS. All thought their needs had been taken into account in supporting their involvement.
- ◇ Most thought that they had been given enough information about the sentences and what these meant for the child or young person. On the whole a chance was created by the YJS for them to talk about any worries that they had about the offence or the child or young person who had committed it.
- ◇ In all six cases the YJS had explained how they would keep their details confidential. All had a chance to say how much they wanted to be involved in the work with the child or young person. In one example they were helped by the YJS to prepare the messages they wanted to get across in the restorative justice conference with the children and young people and felt *"it really made a difference with the young people who had caused damage to the PCT owned building"*.
- ◇ Three of the six had directly benefited from the work undertaken by the child or young person who had committed the offence. Where there were concerns about their safety, the YJS had in all cases given this proper attention and they knew who to contact if they had any worries.
- ◇ In the main victims knew who to contact if they had a complaint about the work of the YJS. All were completely satisfied with the service provided to them.

Sharing good practice

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

Work in the courts

General criterion: 1.2

An 11 year old boy with a low level of maturity had real difficulties in vocalising anything, let alone details of the offence for his court report. The worker set the scene in the form of a game with a series of coloured pictures and articles connected to the offence and the young boy used these materials to tell the worker what had happened. Sad and smiley faces were used to demonstrate how he was feeling at the time. This helped to analyse his offending for the PSR.

Work with children and young people at risk of offending

General criteria: 2.1 and 2.4

Jonathan broke into a local community centre and stole a member of staff's handbag. This caused a great deal of upset not only for the victim but for those who were using the community centre at the time. The restorative justice coordinator considered how the community centre users and Jonathan could be brought together to help restore the users' confidence and ensure that Jonathan was not banned from using the centre, which was one of very few community resources in the area. The restorative justice worker talked to both parties and arranged a restorative justice conference. Although the conference did not go ahead at the request of the victim, the process enabled Jonathan to understand the impact of what he had done to the victim, his mother and other children in the community. The fact that Jonathan was willing to be part of the conference meant that the victim and other users were able to see that Jonathan had some regrets for what he had done.

Work with children and young people who have offended

General criterion: 2.5

Children and young people who had difficulty in understanding what was in their Youth Offender Panel report were helped to comprehend this. An easy to read version of the report was designed for the younger children and for those with learning disabilities. This included short, clear sentences and faces to depict simple expressions.

**Work with
parents/carers**

**General criterion:
2.9**

The parenting worker had established an ADHD support group for parents/carers and their children who had contact with the YJS. Parents/carers could attend as and when they wanted and access advice from local professionals. This included dietary advice and a focus on how ADHD affected children and young people who had offended. To help parents/carers understand what ADHD was like from their children's perspective, the parenting worker had asked a young person to make a leaflet about her experiences of ADHD which she undertook as part of her reparation. The leaflet was well received by parents/carers and was made available for new members of the group.

**Victims and
restorative justice**

**General criterion:
4.1**

Mary a service user of the YJS was highlighted by her school as being at risk of sexual exploitation/engaging in sexual activity with older males and was brought to the notice of the Engage team. They coordinated a joint approach between the YJS parenting and sexual health workers to visit Mary's mother with a view to preventing her daughter becoming a victim of sexual exploitation.

**Management and
leadership**

**General criterion:
5.2**

Board plans to address low involvement of YJS children and young people in full-time education included redefining their status as 'Vulnerable Learners'. This change was aimed at facilitating improved access, processes for clearly identifying which YJS children and young people needed support and a joint forum for ETE planning for these young people. Attention was also given to ensuring a coherent model to underpin joint work and achieving clear links with the 14-19 strategy and language screening for all YJS children and young people with ETE needs.

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.

The local court was Blackburn Youth Court which sat every Thursday. The Crown Court that covered the area was Preston.

Strengths:

- (1) The court team was supplied with a list of cases from the youth court. It then followed up children and young people, with CPS and YJS records, where they were at risk of secure or custodial remand. When relevant cases were identified options for secure accommodation or bail support were established. All children and young people detained overnight were also visited and assessed within 24 hours.
- (2) The YJS commissioned Appropriate Adults from Child Action Northwest who provided fully trained volunteers. There was a feedback system in place from that service to alert the YJS of new cases seen by the volunteers.
- (3) Court workers attended all remand reviews. The YJS had its own remand budget and was able to purchase remand services directly from providers. Child Action Northwest provided a dedicated PACE bed and a remand foster bed which was used regularly. Northern Care Ltd provided placements where more structured remand provision was required.
- (4) Bail recommendations were prepared by the team, with further bail applications made as needed. It was recognised by partners that the YJS offered a good service, particularly with reference to intensive bail support.
- (5) A range of alternatives to custodial remand were available, including bail ISSP. Workers within the team were able to provide comprehensive ISSP packages at short notice. The team maintained good links with partner agencies, particularly with schools with whom ISSP timetables were shared on a weekly basis to maximise compliance.
- (6) The court's use of secure remands between April and December 2007 narrowly missed the YJB target to reduce to 9% the total number of all remands (achieving 9.1%). This performance was better than the average regionally and nationally.

- (7) There was good attention to safeguarding issues within the court team, who were aware of its responsibilities under the Children Act 2004. All remanded children and young people were assessed within 24 hours, and safeguarding information recorded on a checklist that accompanied all of them to custody. Children's social care services attended monthly vulnerability meetings with the YJS.

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.

Strengths:

- (1) There was an experienced court team. Staff were enthusiastic and committed and partners confirmed that they came to court well prepared. Weekend and bank holiday cover by the court team was on a rota basis. Good attention was paid to the team's training needs. Three team members were undertaking the Certificate in Effective Practice towards the Foundation Degree in Youth Justice.
- (2) Court staff and managers met regularly with sentencers at both operational and management levels through the Youth Court Panel, Court Users' Group, PYO meetings and via well-developed informal contacts. Feedback was provided by the YJS at these meetings. Some magistrates requested specific feedback and there was also active discussion in court regarding sentencing options. The YJS was recognised as providing a quality service that had the confidence of sentencers.
- (3) Court reports were generally timely and most were objective, impartial and free from discriminatory language. Reports generally included evidence gathered through the Asset assessment.
- (4) All reports for court were based on an interview with the child or young person and the majority included the parent/carer where this was appropriate. Where Looked After Children were involved, the author liaised with children's services to inform the report in three out of four instances.
- (5) There were some strong examples of child-centred approaches to interviews for the production of court reports.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) There were no processes in place to obtain systematic feedback from courts on the quality of reports and nor were they evaluated to inform practice particularly in relation to diversity issues.

- (2) No systematic process was in place to provide feedback to sentencers on outcomes for children and young people.
- (3) Court reports did not sufficiently address the maturity of the child or young person with regard to their understanding of the seriousness of the offence in 14 out of 24 cases.

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

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.

Prevention work was commissioned in both the YISP and through the YIP in Mill Hill.

Strengths:

- (1) There were clear criteria for the allocation of prevention places and a representative panel met to identify cases appropriate to the service.
- (2) In general an Onset referral and screening form had been completed linked to the criteria of the scheme and verified through locally agreed processes.
- (3) In the main the initial Onset assessment had been completed in accordance with appropriate timescales and was informed by the child or young person and their parent/carer. In ten out of 12 cases these assessments identified positive, supportive and pro-social factors.
- (4) Race and ethnicity had been recorded in all cases and most children and young people had completed an *Over To You* form. In all cases where diversity factors had been identified, plans had been put in place to minimise their impact.
- (5) Timely and purposeful home visits had been undertaken in ten out of 12 cases.
- (6) On the whole there were timely intervention plans outlining who would deliver the interventions and progress against objectives had been reviewed in line with the national standard guidelines. Most cases identified appropriate interventions that were expected to address: likelihood of offending behaviour, the RoH to others, victim awareness, staying safe and community reintegration.
- (7) A nominated lead professional had been allocated to ten of the 12 cases.
- (8) There had been joint working between the YJS and its partners that facilitated the sharing of information particularly in the case of Looked After Children. Seven out of eight cases were delivered to plan and five out of eight were achieved in reasonable timescales.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) There was an inaccurate assessment of the relevant RoSH indicators in three out of 12 cases that were screened through Onset. There was no Onset RoSH form completed in two cases where it should have been and no acceptable reason was recorded for these omissions.
- (2) Few intervention plans had outcome oriented objectives or were appropriately sequenced and signed by the child or young person. There were few planned interventions that were time limited and in six out of ten cases there was no exit strategy.
- (3) Reviews of ONSET only integrated other plans in half of the cases and addressed RoSH in five out of 12 instances. There was no review of RoSH in all five cases where there had been a significant change in the child or young person's circumstances.

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.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) There were physical health needs identified in four out of 12 cases. However, no such cases were highlighted in the Onset assessment and no referrals or services delivered in respect of these needs.
- (2) Specialist referrals to CAMHS did not routinely take place on an Onset score of 2 or more.
- (3) There were emotional and mental health needs identified in seven out of 12 cases. Only three of these cases were highlighted in the Onset assessment and only one referral was made. Two out of the seven children and young people identified with an emotional and mental health need received a service.
- (4) Substance misuse needs were identified in three out of 12 cases. None of these cases were highlighted on Onset and there were no referrals or services delivered in respect of these needs.
- (5) Where health services were not provided such cases were not brought to the attention of the manager or Preventative Steering Group.

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.

Strength:

- (1) Checks with social services were made in eight out of 12 instances and in these eight cases the child or young person's status was clearly recorded.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Evidence indicated seven out of 12 children and young people had been a risk to themselves either currently or in the past. In addition, four had been identified as being at risk from others. However, in the four cases where a vulnerability action plan had been required none had been produced.
- (2) In cases where it was deemed necessary to make a referral to children's social care services, only two out of the four cases had been referred. In both cases where these referrals had been made joint work had not been effectively communicated or delivered to plan within a reasonable timescale.
- (3) In only five out of ten cases was safeguarding action taken that was appropriate to the case.

2.4 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) Statutory mainstream education needs were identified accurately in all three relevant cases.
- (2) Where there was a need for statutory other education this was identified accurately in all four cases. One of these cases needed referral on to other services which was done and an intervention was provided.
- (3) The preventative service helped ensure that the child or young person was supported in accessing local services in six out of eight cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Of the three statutory mainstream education cases two needed referral but only one of these was subsequently referred and offered an intervention.

- (2) There was no evidence that the one statutory mainstream case that did not get referred on was brought to the attention of the Preventative Steering Group or that any service was provided.
- (3) Where the child or young person had been formally permanently excluded or had extended sanctioned absence from mainstream school the YJS and its partners had not taken action to reintegrate them into full-time education in two out of five cases.

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

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.

Strengths:

- (1) In the majority of cases initial Assets were completed on time in accordance with the national standard timescale.
- (2) The initial Asset was informed by at least one interview with the child, parents/carers and contact with children's social care services in the large majority of cases. They also contained information from education or training providers in 21 out of 34 cases. Where parents/carers were involved with the Asset, the specific and individual needs identified by them were reflected in the assessment. Supportive and pro-social factors were also identified in most Assets.
- (3) Where children and young people had been invited to complete a *What Do You Think?* form they had done so in all cases.
- (4) Race and ethnicity had been clearly recorded in most instances. Diversity issues and potentially discriminating and disadvantaging factors had been actively assessed at an early stage in the majority of cases. Such factors had been identified in 23 cases and arrangements made to minimise their impact in 21 of these. Full attention had been paid to methods likely to be most effective with children and young people in 24 out of 36 cases.
- (5) The Asset RoSH assessment covered victims' issues thoroughly in three out of four cases.
- (6) In 29 out of 36 cases there had been a timely and purposeful home visit that was repeated where necessary.

- (7) Final warnings were generally delivered within 20 working days of the decision and all of these children and young people had had an intervention delivered to them.
- (8) On the whole reports were prepared for the Youth Offender Panel. In general the child or young person's parent/carer or in the case of Looked After Children, corporate parent, attended the panel meetings.
- (9) Intervention plans for referral orders were likely to address reparation to the victim and/or the wider community as well as including an intervention programme to prevent reoffending. Other intervention plans were likely to address LoR in nine out of ten cases, victim awareness and staying safe in six out of ten cases and community reintegration in seven out of ten cases.
- (10) All intervention plan objectives were reviewed within national standard timescales and were informed by a reassessment of Asset. Generally intervention plans were sensitive to diversity issues. In the main reviews integrated other plans appropriately.
- (11) Sharing of information and delivery of the intervention plan, particularly in cases of Looked After Children, was effective in ten out of 11 cases and achieved within reasonable timescales in seven out of 11 cases.
- (12) Interventions delivered sufficiently addressed LoR in 18 of 23 cases and community reintegration in 15 out of 23. Where interventions were not carried out according to the plan, most cases had the reasons for departing from it clearly recorded.
- (13) In general steps had been taken to ensure that the child or young person fully understood the requirements of the order and penalties should it be breached. Usually the first appointment after sentence took place within the national standard timescales. Inductions were also generally timely and comprehensive.
- (14) Seven out of 11 Youth Offender Panels sat within 20 days of the order being made. In most cases the referral order contract started within five days of the panel meeting.
- (15) The frequency of appointments conformed to the national standard in the majority of cases. They also met RoH and safeguarding considerations and supported the achievement of the intervention plan objectives in 17 out of 25 cases.
- (16) Generally YJS workers monitored attendance across all interventions. They took effective action to ensure compliance and made consistent and appropriate judgements about absences. In most cases breach action was instigated and resolved within the required timescales.
- (17) In six out of eight cases, where there were accommodation needs, action was taken and the six cases were monitored throughout the order.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Initial Assets were not considered to be of sufficient quality in 19 out of 34 cases. There were three additional cases where the initial Assets had not been completed at the beginning of the sentence.
- (2) More than half of the children and young people were not invited to complete a *What Do You Think?* form or an alternative.
- (3) Identification of RoSH was insufficient, with 14 cases out of 32 being inaccurately screened.
- (4) An Asset RoSH assessment was not completed in 12 out of 16 cases where there should have been one. There was only one case where an acceptable explanation was recorded for this in Asset.
- (5) Two of four cases, where RoSH classifications had been made, were not the correct level. The RoSH had not been completed to a sufficient standard in two out of the four cases. Effective middle or higher management oversight was evident in only one of the two high-risk cases identified. Interventions planned were only likely to address RoH in half of the cases.
- (6) Whilst RoH to others had been reviewed in ten out of 18 cases, of the six that required a subsequent three month review only two had been completed. There had been no review of RoH in five of the eight cases where there had been a significant change in the child or young person's circumstances.
- (7) Interventions delivered did not sufficiently address RoH to others in 17 out of 23 cases or victim awareness in 13 out of 23 cases.

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 SQUIFA had been used in five of seven cases where children and young people had possible emotional and mental health needs.
- (2) There was evidence to show that the YJS had supported children and young people to access local health services in 16 out of 20 cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The YJS CAMHS link worker post had been vacant since January 2008. Arrangements had recently been made for a replacement, but the gap had made it difficult for staff to address cases in need of such services in the interim.

- (2) There was evidence of physical health needs in eight cases but of these only three were referred for specialist assessment and only two cases had had an intervention delivered.
- (3) There were 18 cases of children and young people with emotional and mental health needs and of these only seven were referred for specialist assessment and only four out of 18 had had an intervention delivered.
- (4) Substance misuse needs were evident in 23 cases of which 14 were referred for specialist assessment and an intervention was delivered in 13 of these.
- (5) Where health services had not been provided to the child or young person, they had been referred to a manager or the Board in only one instance out of seven relevant cases.

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.

Strengths:

- (1) The YJS had checked the status of children and young people with children's social care services in all cases and this had been clearly recorded in 35 out of 37 cases.
- (2) Children's social care services had been involved in five out of seven cases and liaison had taken place between them and the YJS in 17 out of 19 cases.
- (3) Where a vulnerability action plan had been produced for children and young people at risk, the content was found to meet the assessed need in seven out of nine cases. The YJS worker had made a referral to children's social care services in eight of the nine cases where one was necessary.
- (4) Joint working between the YJS staff and children's social care services staff to address safeguarding issues was effectively communicated in five out of seven cases.
- (5) Social work qualified staff undertook safeguarding issues where they arose in the cases they managed. Handover to mainstream children's social care services was arranged as part of the exit plans. Action taken was appropriate to the safeguarding needs of the child or young person in 14 out of 22 cases.

Area for improvement:

- (1) More than half of the children and young people had been at risk from themselves either currently or in the past. A significant proportion of these cases involved alcohol misuse with ten currently at risk and 12 previously.

The second highest group of risks related to being reckless or wilfully disregarding their own health and safety (nine currently and seven previously had been at risk in this respect). Half of the children and young people were or had been at risk from their parent/carer. A vulnerability action plan had not been produced to reduce any identified needs in 13 out of 22 cases where one was required.

2.8 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) There were nine cases where needs were identified for statutory mainstream educational services. Of these cases four were referred for specialist assessment within the YJS and four received an intervention to promote learning. Three cases were referred outside the YJS and a service was provided by the local authority in all three cases.
- (2) The need for education and training services for children and young people over the age of 16 was identified in ten cases. Nine of these were referred within the YJS for assessment and an intervention was delivered to eight.
- (3) The YJS had taken action to reintegrate the child or young person into full-time education in ten out of 12 cases where they had been formally, permanently excluded or had had an extended sanctioned absence from the mainstream school.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) None of the four cases where there was a learning difficulty or disability were referred on for specialist assessment. Although two had a statement of special educational needs there had been no contact made by the YJS with the SENCO or an educational psychologist.
- (2) There were eight cases where a need was identified for other statutory educational services. Of these cases, three were referred for assessment within the YJS and only one was provided with an intervention related to the identified need which promoted learning. Whilst one case was referred to an outside specialist, and had had a local authority service provided, six did not get a service to meet their need.
- (3) In the four cases of children and young people aged 16 or over who were referred outside of the YJS and had had an identified education or training need, the local authority had delivered a service in only one case.

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.

Strengths:

- (1) Parenting support available to the YJS parents/carers was delivered in a range of ways. The multi-agency team included parents/carers with a range of professionals to plan and deliver services to address the needs of the children and young people. The family group meetings and the Families Project were specialist interventions delivered by the third sector that included parents/carers along with other family members.
- (2) The YJS had a principal parenting coordinator to deliver interventions and promote best practice who also oversaw parenting officers and mentors.
- (3) In most cases parents/carers had been made aware of the requirements of interventions that were undertaken with their children and had been kept informed about their progress.
- (4) The active engagement of parents/carers in their children's supervision was facilitated by the YJS, or their partner agency, in 20 out of 26 cases.
- (5) Parents/carers had been referred for a parenting intervention in the majority of cases where there was evidence this was needed. Parenting skills were assessed and these were usually timely and identified both risks and protective factors.
- (6) A parenting intervention was proposed in eight out of nine cases. In most instances this was informed by an assessment sensitive to the diverse needs of the parent/carer.
- (7) There was a parenting handbook provided as a guide that included advice and information about parenting issues. It gave details of key agencies offering help and support to parents/carers at local and national levels and offered this information in other languages.

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.

There was a rolling consultation with children and young people by the council that was used to refresh the Children and Young People's Plan. The outcomes and impact on future plans was fed back to children and young people through a publication called *The Shuttle* designed in an easy to read format.

Strengths:

- (1) Child friendly and easy to read feedback was elicited from children and young people at the end of interventions such as victim awareness, peer pressure or reparation programmes. This information was used at team level to inform future work.
- (2) A *Have Your Say* form was used to gather information about the YJS from children and young people. A version of the form had been developed to gather feedback from those attending Youth Offender Panels and there was evidence this was evaluated and reported back to panel members.
- (3) There was well-publicised advice on what to do to make a complaint about the YJS which was explained in all advice and information leaflets.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Children and young people in the YJS were not generally provided with information about what happened to services as a result of their feedback.

2.11 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) For the one prevention case work where there was an accommodation need outcomes had improved for the child or young person.
- (2) Out of 12 preventative cases ten had not received a reprimand or final warning or been convicted of an offence. In those cases where children and young people had offended, 24 out of 35 had not been convicted of a further offence since the start of the order.

- (3) In eight out of 12 cases the child or young person had complied with the preventative programme. In those cases where children or young people had offended they had complied with the requirements of their order in 29 out of 37 cases.
- (4) Generally prevention cases that had been re-scored Onset assessments showed an improvement at the end compared to the start of the programme. Where children and young people had offended and the Asset assessment had been re-scored it showed an improvement in 20 out of 32 cases.
- (5) In cases where children and young people had offended the most common criminogenic needs were family and personal relationships and thinking and behaviour. In the first priority area of criminogenic need 21 out of 36 cases showed either some or significant improvement, in the second 19 out of 36 cases showed either some or significant improvement and in the third around half of cases showed some or significant improvement.
- (6) There was evidence of learning outcomes or skills being applied in seven out of 12 prevention cases. Where children or young people had offended learning outcomes or skills had been applied by them in 22 out of 36 cases.
- (7) Resources allocated to prevention cases were consistent with the LoR in 75% of cases. Those allocated in cases where the child or young person had offended were consistent with RoH to others, LoR and risk of safeguarding in the majority of cases.
- (8) Resources were used efficiently in outcomes planned with the child or young person in seven out of 12 prevention cases and in most cases where they had offended.
- (9) There was a 20.1% reduction in the number of children and young people who were first-time entrants into the criminal justice system which was better than the YJB key performance indicator (5% by 2007/2008 from 2005/2006). This performance was also better than the family, region and national result.
- (10) Pre-court reoffending was reduced by more than the 5% target achieving 45.6% against the YJB baseline. This performance was better than the family, region or national results in 2007/2008. First tier penalties also showed encouraging results where there was a 20.7% reduction against the YJS baseline. Again, this was a stronger performance than the family, region and national levels of performance.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) In all five prevention cases there was no reduction in safeguarding risks. Safeguarding factors had not been managed effectively in four out of the five prevention cases. Safeguarding factors amongst children and young people who had offended had not been managed effectively in all four cases.

- (2) Accommodation provision had not improved for children and young people who had offended in five out of nine cases.
- (3) Although there were improvements in scores in prevention cases, these did not carry through to priority areas. The top three criminogenic factors identified amongst these cases were family and personal relationships (relating to 11 out of 12 cases), thinking and behaviour (which included ten out of 12 cases) and motivation to change (included in ten out of 12 cases). In the first priority need area there was some progress in five out of 12 cases, in the second there was some progress in four out of 11 cases and the third showed some progress in only three cases out of 11.
- (4) In prevention work there was no verifiable positive change in attitude in seven out of 12 cases or behaviour in six out of 12 cases.
- (5) Demonstrable benefits to the community were low amongst children and young people who had offended, with an average around 31% for community reparation, reduction in seriousness of offending, reduction in frequency of offending, reduced threat to victims and potential victims or reduced vulnerability and risk of safeguarding.
- (6) Provable benefits to the community amongst children and young people who had offended indicated 19 out of 37 had a positive change in attitude, 16 out of 37 had a change in their behaviour and 12 out of 37 had improved in victim awareness. There were 16 cases out of 37 that showed no demonstrable benefits to the community at all.
- (7) The reduction of community penalties was not a strong area of performance with an increase of 11.9% against the YJB target of a reduction of 5%. This performance was also not as good as the family (6.9% reduction), region (0.8% reduction) or national levels (1.5% reduction).
- (8) In 58% of cases resources allocated to prevention cases were not consistent with the child or young person's RoH or safeguarding needs.

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.

Strengths:

- (1) Initial Assets were mostly completed to the national standard timescales and involved at least one interview with the child or young person. Positive and pro-social factors had been identified in 11 out of 14 cases.
- (2) Of the three children or young people offered the chance to complete a *What Do You Think?* form, all three had gone on to complete it.
- (3) Race and ethnicity had been clearly recorded in all cases. Diversity issues and potentially disadvantaging or discriminatory factors had been actively assessed at an early stage in nine out of 14 cases. Such factors had been identified in six out of ten cases and plans had been put into place to minimise their impact in five out of the six identified cases.
- (4) There was middle or senior management involvement in all the high-risk cases.
- (5) Most accommodation needs were assessed and monitored and the YJS worker actively worked with others to secure appropriate provision.
- (6) In the majority of cases an up-to-date core Asset was provided to the custodial establishment within one hour of the arrival of the child or young person. Within 24 hours the YJS had sent the PSR and post-court report as well.
- (7) Specific risk factors were assessed in most cases and immediately communicated, both verbally and in writing, to the receiving secure establishment.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Whilst there was evidence of recent work to improve Assets, audits of initial Assets found that they were of insufficient quality in ten out of 14 cases. In addition they were only informed by parents/carers' inputs in half of cases

and most children or young people had not been invited to complete a *What Do You Think?* form or an equivalent.

- (2) Screening of indicators of serious harm was not accurate in six out of 14 cases. The RoSH form had not been completed in five out of the 11 cases where it was necessary to do so and no acceptable reason was recorded on Asset. The RoSH had not been completed to a sufficient standard in half of cases.
- (3) There was no Asset risk management plan completed in two out of the three relevant cases.
- (4) In the main the YJS had not sent previous convictions or health and educational plans to the custodial establishment in line with the 24 hour national standard.

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.

Strengths:

- (1) In all cases the YJS worker contributed to the initial training plan and ensured the Asset informed it.
- (2) Home education views informed nine out of 14 initial training plans.
- (3) The local authority social worker attended and contributed to training plan meetings in two out of three cases.
- (4) The training plans were generally completed within the appropriate timescales and were seen and signed by the children and young people. In the main plans identified which elements would be delivered in custody and which in the community.
- (5) Training plans addressed the LoR in 11 out of 14 cases and community reintegration in eight out of 14 cases.
- (6) Three out of four cases, where there was an emotional or mental health need, had interventions that were jointly delivered to plan by the YJS, the custodial establishment and others.
- (7) Five out of seven cases, where there was substance misuse need, had interventions that were jointly delivered to plan and in reasonable timescales by the YJS, the custodial establishment and others.
- (8) Joint work to address ETE needs was delivered to plan in 12 out of 16 cases and there was effective communication in nine of these.

- (9) Frequency of appointments conformed to the national standard requirements in all cases. In general they met risk RoH and safeguarding considerations, as well as supporting the achievement of the training plan objectives.
- (10) In all cases parents/carers had been encouraged by the YJS to retain contact with their children. They had also been assisted to attend planning and review meetings in all cases.
- (11) The YJS worker attended the final review meeting and actively contributed in all cases as did the social workers involved in the three relevant cases.
- (12) Social care status had been checked and recorded. There had been liaison between the YJS worker and children's social care services in all five relevant cases.
- (13) Evidence showed that the child or young person was at the time or in the past at risk from themselves in eight cases. The most common risk was substance misuse or by being reckless and wilfully disregarding their own health or safety. There was also evidence to show that children and young people were at the time or in the past at risk from others in five cases. The most common risk was from parents/or carers or peers. Vulnerability action plans had been put in place in three out of five cases. The worker had made a referral to children's social care services in one case and this had been jointly delivered to plan and effectively communicated to them. Action taken was appropriate in all five cases where a vulnerability plan was needed.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The home PCT only informed initial training plans in three out of 14 cases.
- (2) Training plans had few instances where they were sequenced appropriately.
- (3) Whilst there was a good example of restorative justice conferencing in custody, there was little inclusion of victim restorative processes involved in the majority of cases.
- (4) Interventions planned were unlikely to address staying safe, included in only four out of 11 cases, and victim awareness which was included in only two out of 13 cases.

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) Generally children and young people were provided with a timely and comprehensive induction on release from custody.
- (2) In most cases the intervention plan was reviewed within the ten day national standard and subsequently at the review date. Generally the intervention plan review was informed by a reassessment of Asset.
- (3) RoH to others had been appropriately reviewed within the national standard timescale, at the subsequent three month point and every three months thereafter.
- (4) The one young person where new health issues had been identified whilst in custody had had their needs sufficiently addressed.
- (5) Specialist emotional and mental health services were provided in all cases where this had been identified as a need.
- (6) All ETE needs identified were provided with specialist services.
- (7) Constructive interventions successfully challenged the child or young person to accept responsibility for their offending behaviour and its consequences in six out of nine cases. Interventions delivered were also sensitive to diversity issues in seven out of ten cases.
- (8) Largely the appointments in the community phase conformed to national standards, met any RoH or safeguarding considerations and supported the achievement of intervention plan objectives.
- (9) A timely and purposeful home visit had been carried out and repeated as necessary in seven out of ten cases.
- (10) In most cases the YJS worker monitored attendance across all interventions. They had also taken effective action to ensure compliance and had made consistent and appropriate judgements with regard to absence.
- (11) There was sufficient evidence in the majority of cases to establish that the worker had shown commitment to their work with the child or young person, motivated and supported them throughout their sentence and reinforced positive behaviour.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) In four out of six relevant cases the RoH to others had not been reviewed following a significant incident.
- (2) Only two out of ten individual learning plans had continued following release.
- (3) Specialist drug misuse services were only provided in three out of six cases where it had been identified as a need.

3.4 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) Ten out of 14 children and young people had complied with the requirements of the order.
- (2) In most cases resources allocated were consistent with RoH to others, LoR and risk of safeguarding. They were also allocated in a way consistent with the child or young person's PPO status.
- (3) Resources were used efficiently in nine out of 13 cases to achieve the outcomes planned with the child or young person.
- (4) Attention had been given to long-term community reintegration issues in nine out of 14 cases.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) There was no evidence of a reduction in factors linked to risk of safeguarding in four out of six cases.
- (2) Accommodation provision had not improved in three out of five cases.
- (3) Since the community phase of the sentence seven out of 12 children or young people had been convicted of another offence.
- (4) There were few benefits to the community identified for children and young people who had undertaken a custodial order. With six out of 14 there had been no demonstrable benefits at all to the community as a result of their order.
- (5) The top four criminogenic factors were lifestyle, thinking and behaviour, ETE, and also attitudes to offending. In the first priority need area there was some or significant progress in seven out of 14 cases and in both the second and third there was only five out of 14 cases that showed some or significant progress.

- (6) Evidence showed that learning outcomes or skills had been applied by the child or young person in six out of 14 cases.
- (7) Few children and young people demonstrated positive change in attitude or increased victim awareness. A change in behaviour could only be demonstrated in half of the cases.

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.

The YJS has a dedicated restorative justice team with a team leader, two victim workers, one police officer, three youth justice workers and 20 volunteer panel members and is responsible for all victim contact. It also facilitates a Victim Awareness Group. There were development plans in place to expand the range of community reparation projects. A restorative justice assessment process had been established which was undertaken in every case.

Strengths:

- (1) Victim safety had been given appropriate priority in 18 out of 28 cases.
- (2) Generally the police had provided the YJS with victims' details in accordance with the national standard.
- (3) Victims had been invited to participate in a restorative justice process related to the offence in 19 out of 29 cases.
- (4) One victim was involved in offender mediation and one with a referral order through the Youth Offender Panel where suitable support was offered to them.
- (5) Of the 16 cases where the child or young person became involved in community reparation, this started within the first three months of the order in the majority of cases.
- (6) Where victim related work was carried out it took account of the diverse needs of the child or young person involved in most cases and those of the victim where they were involved. Expenses were paid by the YJS to victims for items such as childcare and travel. Interpreters were also provided where necessary.
- (7) There were a range of information leaflets aimed at victims to explain restorative justice, family group meetings and how to make a victim personal statement. These were available in a number of languages.
- (8) Victims were encouraged to return satisfaction questionnaires which were then used to help inform practice.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Whilst there was evidence workers had tried to engage with victims, only seven out of 51 of them had participated in any restorative justice process.
- (2) A limited range of community reparation projects were available, although this had been recognised and plans were in place to increase these.

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 leadership of the YJS had recently changed from a Steering Group into a Board. The Board had been repositioned under the Local Strategic Partnership Board and linked to both the Children and Young People's Trust and the Community Safety Partnership. The Chair of the new Board was the Strategic Head of Children's Services. The YJS was working on a continuation budget as this could not be finalised until the single status job evaluation exercise had been completed.

Strengths:

- (1) The YJS Board indicated a good range of representation from across the local authority and its partners at a senior level. The membership included key strategic representatives as well as operational specialists and core funding bodies. Whilst there had been previous difficulties with consistent representation from health, this had been resolved in the new arrangements.
- (2) The Board had established an improvement plan for the YJS in July 2008. This had identified a number of strategies where further work was required to integrate that of the YJS into the wider work and plans in children's services and community safety. There was a commitment from the leadership to establish a three year plan building on the one year plan and the findings from this inspection. The YJS was represented on the LSCB and the Community Safety Partnership Steering Group.
- (3) Diversity issues were monitored by the Board that were informed by trend analysis performance information. The YJS was actively developing approaches in the prevention of violent extremism.
- (4) Performance was monitored by the Board, with regular reporting on YJB performance indicators and additional areas. Performance information informed local planning and commissioning and was used to hold management to account and monitor progress.
- (5) The YJS Board had recently appointed representatives of sufficient seniority within children's services to influence change in ETE. Good use had been made of performance data to analyse areas of weakness and there was a

strong grasp at a strategic level of the areas that required improvement. Action plans were in place to tackle the poor performance in ETE, outcomes at both pre- and post-statutory school leaving age and to heighten the priority and focus given by education services to children and young people who had come to the attention of the YJS. Plans included the redesignation of children and young people in the YJS as vulnerable learners, the development of mechanisms for effective liaison with head teachers and the allocation of funds to employ a second dedicated Connexions worker to work with those on community orders.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Health contributed 4% to the total YJS budget, which was below the 5.8% recommended target.

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.

The YJS Board's improvement plan included objectives aimed at ensuring that there was no unnecessary duplication of partnership work.

Strengths:

- (1) The YJS had commissioned a number of services and had a well-developed process supported by a children's services commissioning team.
- (2) There were strong partnerships with the police where they had worked to maximise the use of final warnings to divert children and young people from prosecution.
- (3) Partnership with sentencers was well developed, underpinned by an experienced court team and a range of liaison arrangements.
- (4) The Pupil Referral Unit attended by many of the YJS children and young people was inspected by Ofsted in January 2008 and found to be providing a good education for those on roll and had achieved a vastly improved attendance rate for most. There was work in progress for the YJS and schools to bid for 'back on track' funding to develop additional focused provision for children and young people with behavioural difficulties.
- (5) There was a good range of post-16 education to employment provision available to those who had offended including pre-education to employment, education to employment and 'Energizer' short vocational courses. The local authority provided education to employment work placements that were ring-

fenced for vulnerable children and young people, in particular Looked After Children, and these opportunities had been extended to include those who had come to the attention of the YJS.

- (6) Ongoing applications were made to increase resources and address identified areas of work such as prevention of violent extremism.
- (7) A number of partnership strategies were under development and included parenting, prevention, education services improvement and high risk of offending and harm.
- (8) There was a draft risk management policy. Resources followed risk and were used well to achieve the outcomes in both custodial and community sentences.
- (9) There was a range of protocols, contracts and SLAs in place to support the partnership arrangements in the YJS including a joint working protocol with Victim Support. The youth justice improvement plan also supported increased integrated working practices and partnership working.
- (10) The YJS worked with local housing providers to address crisis and other housing needs amongst 16 and 17 year old children and young people. The improvement plan included the involvement of the housing strategy manager to establish effective links with housing service delivery plans. There was a youth housing strategy under development.
- (11) A review of the links between the range of preventative panels in children's services was due to report at the end of the year. This was aimed at improving identification and diversion of children and young people from entering the youth justice system. Some prevention services were under review at the time of the inspection and a corporate prevention strategy was included in the improvement plan.
- (12) The Case Intervention Panel dealing with ASBOs and ABCs had merged with the PPO Panel to reduce duplication and re-focus on the priority elements of cases where children and young people were at risk of offending. The panel took up both issues of support and challenge where cases were brought forward. The YJS manager attended the panel along with other senior managers.
- (13) There was an implementation programme in place for the CAF which was due to be completed by April 2009. A stepped approach was being used that had started with five-13 year old children and young people and had recently developed with older ones. Work was continuing to embed the CAF into the work of the YJS.
- (14) Work was in progress to address difficulties in accessing educational information to inform the Assets and PSRs during school holiday periods.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The YJS was not effectively represented in the Lancashire MAPPA. Structural problems meant that there was a lack of clarity in the links that were local to Blackburn and the MAPPA at regional levels making meaningful contributions difficult to achieve.
- (2) There were no protocols between the YJS and its education partners to address respective responsibilities, information sharing, funding arrangements or coordination of work.
- (3) Links between the YJS and individual schools were underdeveloped. Not all schools responded to attendance monitoring requests.
- (4) Excluding those on ISSP, too many children or young people were in part-time education or unemployed. Data supplied by the YJS for the last three quarters showed that on average 36% of children and young people of statutory school age were in part-time education and 32% of those over statutory school age were unemployed.
- (5) Overall, the YJS was performing below national, regional and family averages with regard to achieving educational outcomes although it had made some improvement over the previous year. In 2007/2008 65.5% of children and young people were in full-time education at the end of their order compared with a national average of 71.1% and family average of 70.5%.

Staff supervision, development and training

5.3 General criterion:

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

At the time of the inspection YJS staff were undergoing a job evaluation exercise in response to the single status national agreement for local government.

Strengths:

- (1) The majority of staff felt that they were well supported by their managers whom they thought demonstrated professional management approaches and modelled positive leadership behaviour.
- (2) Most staff were regularly supervised and had had an annual appraisal within the last year that linked to the YJS's business plan.
- (3) A clear set of policies and procedures was in place including lone working and procedures for the management of staff including disciplinary, grievance and capability procedures. Staff generally felt well informed about policies and procedures.

- (4) There was an established Training Plan for 2008/2009 based on a training needs analysis. Most staff felt their training and development needs were met. Youth Offender Panel members attended quarterly panel support meetings where training and information were included and they were appraised on an annual basis. Training on RoSH had taken place shortly before the inspection and the case sample was drawn from an earlier period which was before the training. However, there was some confusion among a number of staff on how to use the tools to assess for RoSH effectively.
- (5) There were 16 volunteer panel members aged between 21-70. A strong support structure for volunteers was in place including induction, training and quarterly panel support meetings and annual appraisals. All panel members had membership to the Association of Panel Members. There was a clear process for evaluation of panels including the young people. This process was linked to 'have your say' approaches and formed the basis of reporting.
- (6) We found a dedicated staff group where most understood their roles and boundaries including partnership working and were able to demonstrate commitment to their work with children and young people.
- (7) Staff from external organisations working with and on behalf of the YJS were appropriately qualified and supervised.
- (8) All staff and volunteers were CRB checked by the YJS and there was a system for renewal in place.
- (9) A clear customer care procedure existed which also dealt with complaints.

Area for improvement:

- (1) The office layout, with the lack of mobile technology, presented difficulties in addressing performance in Asset assessment with staff during supervision. There was no facility to allow for performance improvement through supervision and the discussion of cases on electronic records as computers were located in open plan.

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

Appendix 1: Contextual information

Area

Blackburn with Darwen YJS was located in the North West and, as a single service, covered the Blackburn with Darwen Council Unitary authority.

The area had a population of 137,470 as measured in the Census 2001, 12.6% of which were aged ten to 17 years old. This was higher than the average for England/Wales, which was 10.4%.

The population of Blackburn with Darwen was predominantly White British (77.9%), the population with a black and minority ethnic heritage (22.1%) was significantly above the average for England/Wales of 8.7%.

Reported crime levels for children and young people aged ten to 17 years old across the area at 66.2 per 1,000, were above the average for England/Wales of 53.

The percentage of Looked After Children aged ten and over sanctioned for an offence committed whilst Looked After was 2.8 expressed as a ratio of the percentage of **all** children and young people aged ten or over given a final warning/reprimand or convicted for an offence in Blackburn With Darwen which was above the average for England/Wales of 2.3.

YJS

The YJS boundaries were co-terminus with those of Lancashire Probation Area and Lancashire Police area. One PCT, Blackburn with Darwen NHS, covered the area.

The Youth Justice Plan showed that the YJS had 34 staff and 16 volunteers. 74% of staff were female and 15% had a black or minority ethnic heritage.

The work of the YJS was based in two main offices located in Blackburn.

YJB performance data

The YJB summary of overall YOT performance available at the time of the inspection for the period to March 2008 gave Blackburn with Darwen a score of 3 on a scale where 5 was the maximum. This was above the national and regional performance and the same as the average for comparable YOTs.

Performance on reducing reoffending received a score of 63.3%, which was above that of all comparators.

Appendix 2: Inspection data

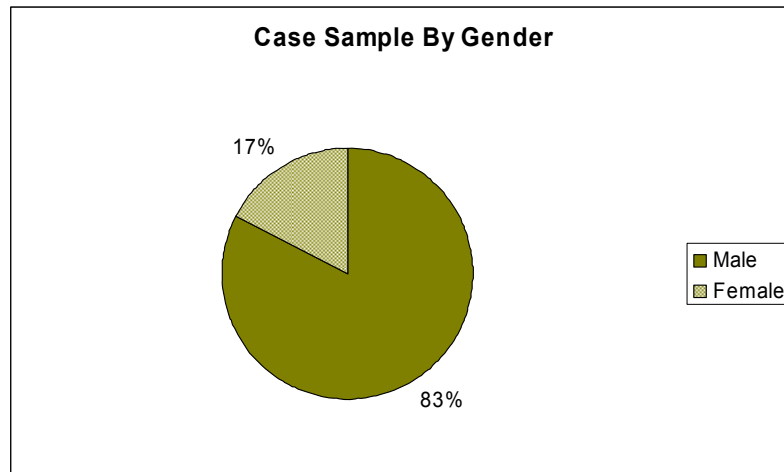
Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in July 2008 and during a contribution to the Blackburn with Darwen Joint Area Review in September 2008.

The inspection consisted of:

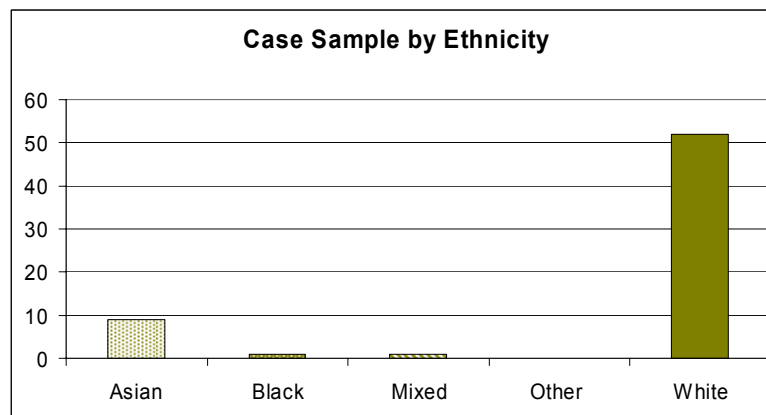
- ◇ evidence in advance
- ◇ examination of YJB performance data and assessments
- ◇ examination of practice in a sample of cases, normally in conjunction with the case manager or other representative, as follows:
 - 12 prevention files
 - 12 final warnings
 - 12 first tier penalties (referral orders, reparation orders)
 - 13 community sentences
 - 14 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

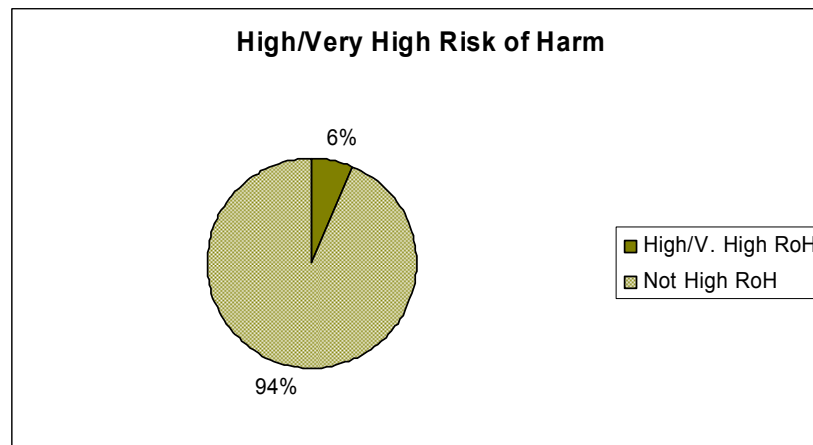
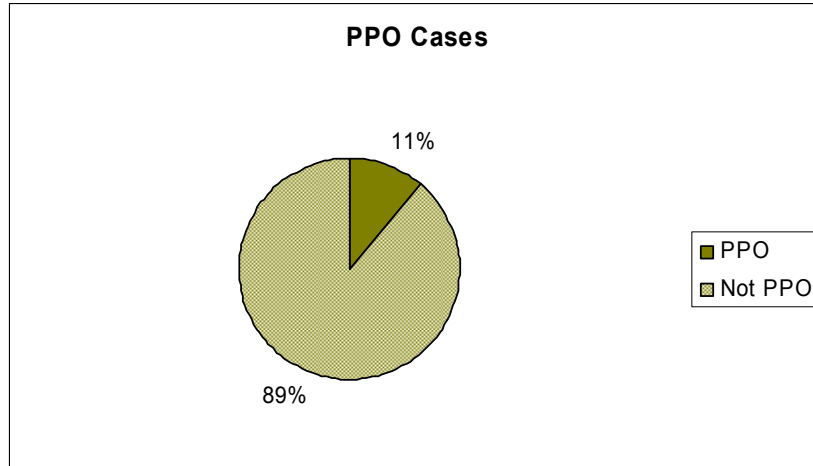
The chosen sample takes into consideration the percentage of girls or young women in contact with the YJS. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



The chosen sample takes into consideration the percentage of black and minority ethnic children and young people in contact with the YJS. 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 service 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>