



**YOUTH  
OFFENDING  
TEAM**  
Inspection

# Press Notice

Tel: Media enquiries: 020 7210 8643

HM Inspectorate of Probation • Second Floor • Ashley House • 2 Monck Street • London • SW1P 2BQ

Tel: 020 7035 2202 • Fax: 020 7035 2237

Email: [HMIP.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIP.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) • <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmiprobation/>

## Independent inspection of probation and youth offending work

### **EMBARGOED UNTIL 09/01/08 PUBLICATION OF INSPECTION REPORT BOLTON YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM**

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

Andrew Bridges, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, said:

“A clear corporate ownership, combined with a robust local leadership and an energetic and committed workforce, produced a largely effective organisation. The team was well regarded and well placed to influence future developments in both community safety and children’s services. Particular strengths were noted in the three key areas of direct work with children and young people; prevention and work with those who offend both within the community and those in custody. Strong performance was noted where education, health or safeguarding needs were evident. High quality interventions with many children and young people were seen, though workload pressures did challenge the ability of the service to respond.

Improvements were needed to achieve consistency in the individual work with children and young people with greater focus on performance management. Development of the victim related work and increased partnership work through local agencies were important areas for improvement.

#### **The report’s main findings are:**

##### ***Work in the courts***

The YOT had good links with the court and engaged positively. This was supported by a well delivered intensive supervision and surveillance programme. None of these enabled a sufficient reduction in the levels of secure remands, though custodial sentences were within national expectations. The quality of reports was variable requiring improvements in assessments of risk, more focus on health and learning needs and reducing the use of colloquial language.

##### ***Work with children and young people in the community***

Prevention and early intervention services were well established delivering good quality assessments and interventions focused on reintegration into mainstream services. Whilst there were effective community links, there was limited capacity to operate outside of a small number of targeted neighbourhoods. Specialist services, particularly those addressing health, education needs and the resettlement and aftercare programme were delivering some high quality interventions. Considerable energy and commitment by staff produced some outstanding individual success stories but these were not found with sufficient consistency. Risk of harm to the public and the likelihood of reoffending were less well established or accurately addressed.

##### ***Work with children and young people subject to Detention and Training Orders***

Much good work was seen through the custodial stage of these sentences by both case managers and

specialist staff in addressing the many identified issues. Children and young people felt that the YOT workers cared about them. Reoffending by these children and young people had not consistently reduced over time with compliance not being sufficiently achieved.

### ***Victims and restorative justice***

The YOT did not have sufficient emphasis on assessing and addressing victim needs and restorative justice and planning was underway to address this. With the limitations in resources and projects available to this part of the YOT it was difficult for it to deliver reparation that took the range of circumstances and needs of both victims and offenders into account.

### ***Management and Leadership***

The YOT Management Board was in a good position to shape and influence the delivery of services in relation to youth crime and anti social behaviour. Key partnerships were in place and were often effective. Most staff worked hard and were committed to successful outcomes. They were well supported by their own managers but they struggled to deliver on all expectations. The YOT was, however, challenged in its overall resourcing, resilience and capacity to deliver on all requirements. Limited managerial capacity to focus on the YOT's detailed performance management was also noted.

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. The inspection of Bolton YOT took place July and September 2007
2. Bolton had a total population of almost 261037 measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 10.6% were aged 10-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was slightly higher than the average for England, which was 10.4%.
3. Nine Inspectorates conduct the Youth Offending Team Inspections. They are Commission for Social Care Inspection, Estyn (HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation, Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.
4. The YOT inspection programme started in June 2003. All 157 YOTs within England and Wales are being inspected over a five year cycle.
5. Comprehensive inspection criteria have been developed to cover the fourth phase of the inspection programme, focusing on:
  - work in the courts
  - children and young people in the community (both those at risk of offending and those who have offended)
  - work with children and young people subject to Detention and Training Orders
  - victims and restorative justice.
  - management of the YOT and partnership arrangements.