



**YOUTH  
OFFENDING  
TEAM**  
Inspection

# Press Notice

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## Independent inspection of probation and youth offending work

### **EMBARGOED UNTIL 14/05/08 PUBLICATION OF INSPECTION REPORT BRADFORD AND DISTRICT YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

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 Bradford and District Youth Offending Service inspection.

Andrew Bridges, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, said:

“We found an energetic and forward-looking organisation, with some innovative ideas which had been translated into practice. The Board was well managed and businesslike and appropriately supported by partner organisations.

There was evidence of strong leadership, but we found inconsistency in managerial control, and as a consequence also in practice, and this required improvement.

The YOT performed well in most areas of work. Attention was needed regarding planning and reviews, particularly for those children and young people in custody. That said, we were confident of the organisation’s structure and ability as being perfectly capable of taking the whole organisation forward.”

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

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

- Safeguarding issues were well attended to and addressed by the specialist court staff.
- Court staff attended remand review meetings in the custodial or secure establishment in line with the national standard and took an active part in the process.
- Pre-sentence reports were judged to give proper attention to the health and substance misuse needs of children and young people.
- Some pre-sentence reports needed to be more analytical, addressing the child or young person's motivation for offending in clearer detail.

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

- Interventions were appropriately focused on reducing the likelihood of offending or antisocial behaviour and community reintegration.
- Review planning, for those children and young people considered at risk of offending, needed to be improved.

- In most cases there was evidence of an active and early assessment of potentially discriminatory or disadvantaging factors, and in every case where such factors were identified a plan had been put in place to minimise its impact.
- The YOT manager chaired a regular meeting to review all high or very high risk of harm cases. This ensured he was aware of these cases, and also brought consistency to the decision-making process around them.

### ***Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences***

- In three-quarters of the relevant cases there was evidence of contact between the YOT worker and parents/carers to encourage their involvement and attendance at planning meetings. This included practical support such as the offering of lifts to facilitate travel.
- Overall, the work undertaken with children or young people serving the custodial part of their sentences scored slightly less well than those in the community.

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

- Some of the reparation work undertaken consisted of significantly large projects in which children and young people needed to invest their time and effort, but to which they could subsequently return as members of the community. The YOT manager had instituted a practice when such a large-scale project was completed of having a plaque erected, indicating that the work had been done by the children and young people from the YOT. This was one of several examples of ways of projecting a positive image of children and young people in Bradford.
- In cases where the victim chose not to attend a Youth Offender Panel, there were some good examples of victim impact statements being presented by victim workers. This ensured that panel members received good information which they could take into account in their engagement with the child or young person.

### ***Management and leadership***

- Partnership arrangements with and around the YOT were impressive and it was very clear that the YOT manager had been a lead figure in developing and more importantly maintaining these. This resulted in there being a wide range of provision available for the children and young people and much of it would be accessible for them after their time under formal supervision
- Bradford and District YOT had been influential in developing the district's approach to tackling antisocial behaviour as part of the Respect action plan pilot. Funding was secured to implement new work with children and young people at risk of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour and this was overseen by one of the YOT team leaders. As a result a clearer process had resulted about how the agencies worked together to deliver a consistent and equitable service. This also entailed the separation of processes for children and young people and for adults

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The inspection of Bradford and District YOT took place in the week beginning 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007
2. Bradford and District had a total population of 467,665, measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 11.8% were aged 10-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was higher than the average for England, which was 10.4%.
3. Eight Inspectorates conduct the Youth Offending Team Inspections. They are 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 Care and Social Services Inspectorate 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. The inspection will be carried out in line with the Government's commitment to proportionate and coordinated inspection in local government, informed by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment results and the Wales Programme for Improvement. A programme has therefore been developed that:
  - is proportionate to risk and only inspects those areas of work where a team is performing well in order to disseminate good practice
  - complements, and is coordinated with, other inspection programmes, principally the Joint Area Reviews of children's services (led by Ofsted) and the Corporate Assessment (led by the Audit Commission)
  - takes account of YOTs' recent development as organisations.
6. Comprehensive standards and criteria have been developed to cover the fourth phase of the inspection, focusing on:
  - Work in the courts
  - children and young people in the community (both those at risk of offending and those who have offended)
  - children and young people subject to custodial sentences
  - victims and restorative justice
  - management of the YOT and partnership arrangements.