



**YOUTH
OFFENDING
TEAM**
Inspection

Press Notice

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Independent inspection of probation and youth offending work

EMBARGOED UNTIL 05/03/08 PUBLICATION OF INSPECTION REPORT BRIDGEND 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 Bridgend Youth Offending Team inspection.

Andrew Bridges, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, said:

“We were pleased to find a Youth Offending team that is contributing effectively to the broader strategic framework of children’s services in the area through well developed partnerships. Particular strengths include its work with children and young people at risk of offending and in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people. There are examples of some innovative practice, especially with regard to education resources available.

However, work in the courts and with children and young people who have offended need improvement, particularly in managing Risk of Harm to others. We are also concerned at the significant gap in resources for providing reparation and an insufficient focus on victim awareness. This report contains a number of recommendations for improvement and the service is in a good position to continue to build on its current practice.

The report’s main findings are:

Management

There was a strong focus on working in partnership and the Youth Justice Plan was well integrated into those of other services that catered to the needs of children and young people in the area and staff within the Youth Offending Team were well supervised and trained.

Work in the courts

Relationships at all levels with the courts were very positive and effective bail support and appropriate adult schemes were available. Pre-sentence report authors needed to develop a clearer understanding of the differences in assessing risk of self harm, vulnerability, likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm to others.

Work with children and young people in the community

Through good partnership working a range of intervention projects were available for children and young people at risk of offending and those who had also offended.

Mental and sexual health and substance misuse services to children and young people was good as was the support provided to those requiring help with their employment, training and education, which included the innovative introduction of a specialist literacy and numeracy tutor. Although not all children and young people were receiving the minimum requirement of 25 hours a week education set by the Youth Justice Board.

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

In all cases the case manager was actively involved in sentence planning and reviews, and contributed to the final training plan, there were some good examples of good joint work between the education support worker in the YOT and the Careers Advisers in the secure establishment that ensured that suitable provisions were made for the children and young people's return to the community.

However, the YOT and secure establishment did not always work jointly to address the children and young people's health needs during the custodial part of their sentence.

Victims and restorative justice

This was a developing area of the YOT's work. Whilst there were innovative victim offender mediation and restorative justice in schools work being undertaken, reparation was under-resourced and was therefore not readily available.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The inspection of Bridgend Youth Offending Team took place in October 2007
2. Bridgend has a total population of 128,645 as measured in the Census 2001, 10.8% of which were aged 10-17 years old. This was slightly higher than the average for England and Wales, 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), Health and Social Care Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation and Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
4. The YOT inspection programme started in June 2003. All 157 YOTs within England and Wales are being inspected over a five to six year cycle.
5. Comprehensive inspection criteria have been developed to cover the third phase of the inspection programme, focusing on:
 - management
 - work in the courts
 - work with children and young people in the community
 - work with children and young people subject to Detention and Training Orders
 - victims and restorative justice.