



**YOUTH  
OFFENDING  
TEAM**  
Inspection

# Press Notice

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## Independent inspection of probation and youth offending work

### **EMBARGOED UNTIL 06/05/08 PUBLICATION OF INSPECTION REPORT CAMDEN 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 Camden Youth Offending Service inspection.

Andrew Bridges, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, said:

'We are pleased to find Camden YOS working well with other agencies and partners, especially the police. Particular strengths include work with parents/carers, victims, and children and young people at risk of offending and those subject to custodial sentences. However, work in the courts and with children and young people in the community who have offended needs improvement specifically in areas of assessing and managing Risk of Harm to others and safeguarding. Finally, the governance of the YOS needs attention in the context of ongoing structural change.

This report includes a number of recommendations for improvements. Camden YOS is in a good position to continue to build on its current practice to provide an effective service in the future.'

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

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

Courts were very satisfied with the services they received from the YOS. Many aspects of pre-sentence reports were good. Some important elements such as analysis of the offence still needed improvement. The use of custody both at remand and sentence stage required further attention and dialogue with the courts.

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

The completion of the Onset and Asset assessment tools was generally sufficient. Too few children and young people were being invited to complete the appropriate self-assessment form. The accuracy of the screening of Risk of Harm and the comprehensiveness of the Risk of Serious Harm to others form and the risk management plan in Asset required attention.

Although health and education provision for children and young people was good, too many were not engaging with those services.

Work with children and young people receiving reprimands or final warnings was well organised and included appropriate interventions. Parents/carers were actively engaged and received a good service.

Youth offender panels were not sitting within 20 working days of the order being made.

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

There were appropriate levels of contact by YOS staff with children and young people whilst serving custodial sentences. Work with secure establishment staff to address health, employment, training and education was generally sufficient

Liaison between the YOS worker and children's services had taken place as appropriate but vulnerability plans were not always produced. Contact in the community in the majority of cases conformed to the national standard. Enforcement and breach action was timely and effective.

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

The quality of the initial contact with victims, the assessment of their needs and their level of involvement in restorative justice interventions was good. Victims who expressed a view were satisfied with the work of the YOS. Conditions in licences or orders had not always taken account of victim safety.

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

Senior managers from the Chief Executive Officer down had a broad knowledge and understanding of youth crime. There was a strong performance culture and a determination to find solutions to achieve targets. There were a number of human resource issues that required attention. The Management Board had a wide remit, which was a strength, evidenced by a number of different departments working effectively together to address youth offending and antisocial behaviour in the borough. However, its scrutiny of the YOS needed to be clearly defined in the context of restructuring and the additional responsibilities of the YOS Head of Service.

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. The inspection of Camden YOS took place in November 2007
2. The London Borough of Camden had a total population of 198,020, measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 7.5% were aged 0-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was lower 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.