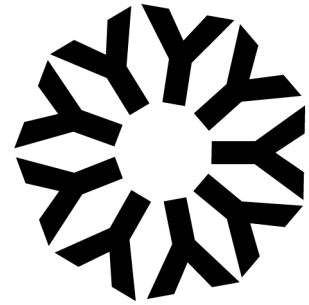


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Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:
Dudley
Youth Offending Service

2006

Foreword

The inspection of the Dudley Youth Offending Service revealed a mixed picture in terms of the work with children and young people.

Strategic management required development, primarily through the Management Board, whilst in the main, operational management was undertaken to a satisfactory standard. We considered that victim and restorative justice work had been under-resourced, with the Youth Offending Service unable to adequately meet the level of need. A comprehensive service to courts was provided, and judged as good. Work with children and young people who had offended needed to improve, particularly in the completion and review of risk of harm assessments and supervision planning. Greater involvement of children and young people and their parents/carers in shaping the service provided to them and the inclusion of voluntary parenting interventions was necessary.

Both staff and managers were committed and positive about their work. This report contains a number of recommendations which we believe will assist Dudley Youth Offending Service in moving forward and delivering improvements.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

June 2006

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in January and March 2006.

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Glossary

ACPC	Area Child Protection Committee
APA	Annual Performance Assessment
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CPN	Community psychiatric nurse
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
DTO	Detention and Training Order
E2E	Entry to Education
ESF	European Social Fund
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMI Prisons	HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
ISP	Initial Supervision Plan
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
IT	Information technology
JAR	Joint Area Review
KYPE	Keep Young People Engaged
LEA	Local Education Authority
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PA	Personal Adviser
PAYP	Positive Activities for Young People
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PSR	Pre-sentence report
SEN	Special Education Needs
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
SSR	Specific sentence report
WPI	Wales Programme for Improvement
YISP	Youth Inclusion Support Panel
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOI	Young Offender Institution
YOIS	Youth Offending Information System
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YOT	Youth Offending Team

Introduction

The joint YOT inspection programme began in September 2003 and is the first full inspection programme to examine the work of the YOTs. The programme is being implemented in three phases and covers all 155 YOTs in England and Wales over a five year cycle.

This, the third phase of the inspection, started in September 2005 and includes all YOTs not previously inspected in phases one and two. Its methodology has been developed to complement that of the JARs of Children's Services in England, and inspections undertaken as part of the WPI, and of Youth Support Services under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 in Wales. Although the YOT programme remains a separate process in both England and Wales, inspections are conducted within a similar timeframe as these other inspection arrangements wherever possible, so that any areas of potential overlap or duplication can be rationalised and reduced.

The YOT inspection covers five core areas of work:

- ◆ management and partnership arrangements, including the role and functioning of the local Board
- ◆ work in the courts
- ◆ work with children and young people in the community
- ◆ work with children and young people subject to DTOs
- ◆ victims and restorative justice.

Findings from the YOT inspection inform not only the JAR but also the Corporate Assessment, APA and CPA in England, and in Wales inspections undertaken as part of the WPI and of Youth Support Services.

On conclusion of the inspection, the YOT is asked to prepare an action plan responding to the recommendations. Once agreed, the action plan is forwarded to the YJB to monitor its implementation.

Overview of the area

- ◆ The Metropolitan District of Dudley is part of the Black Country and is situated in the West Midlands of England.
- ◆ Dudley had a total population of 305,155, measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 22.4% were aged 0-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was very close to the average for England of 22.6%.
- ◆ Dudley had a predominantly white population, 93.7%, and this was higher than the average for England of 90.9%. The percentage of Asian or Asian British residents, 4.0%, was marginally lower than the average for England of 4.6%. The percentage of Black or Black British residents, at 1.0%, was lower than the English average of 2.3%.
- ◆ The level of employment in Dudley, 61.3%, was close to the average for England of 60.9%. The level of unemployment was 3.9%, higher than the average for England, which was 3.4%. There was a much lower percentage of students resident in Dudley, both economically active and inactive, 4.9% compared to 7.3% in England. The percentage of retired residents, at 15.0%, was higher than the average for England of 13.5%.
- ◆ Dudley Council was classified as fair in the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2004.
- ◆ The YJB figures for youth offending for the period April 2004 to March 2005 show that 52.7 offences were committed per 1000 children and young people aged 0-17 years in Dudley.
- ◆ The YJB summary of YOT performance for April-December 2005 awarded Dudley YOS a performance level of 3.

Scoring summary

4: Excellent; 3: Good; 2: Adequate; 1: Inadequate.

	Section score
Management	2
Work in the courts	3
Work with children and young people in the community	2
Work with children and young people subject to DTOs	2
Victims and restorative justice	1

Overall assessment

Whilst the YOS was well managed operationally, the strategic management required development. Partnership working within the YOS had generally been strong, and there was a broad range of services for children and young people within Dudley. Initial assessments were timely and communicated to the children and young people, although some areas such as the assessment of risk of harm, objective setting and supervision plan reviews required substantial improvement. Victim work and parenting work had been under-resourced, and although they still required attention, at the time of the inspection these areas were beginning to develop. DTO work was effectively undertaken, and work in the courts was good.

Diversity issues

Dudley YOS worked with all children and young people in an individualised way that enabled diversity needs to be addressed, although explicit reference to diversity issues was not often made in their assessments, which may have led to some covert diversity needs being missed during the assessment process. The YOS was working to deliver the Race Action Plan and there was a Race Equality Scheme within Dudley Borough Council.

Strengths:

- ◆ Training methods employed by the YOS were varied and responsive to the needs of staff members.
- ◆ Bail packages were tailored to the needs of children and young people.
- ◆ The interventions delivered as part of ISSP were mostly developed for use with white boys and young men, although it was positive to see that this had been recognised by ISSP staff, and work had been done to engage with girls and young women, as well as children and young

people from minority ethnic groups, to provide interventions responsive to their needs.

- ◆ The majority of interventions with children and young people were individualised, allowing the case manager to respond effectively to diverse needs.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Diversity was only addressed satisfactorily in half of the PSRs seen as part of the inspection.
- ◆ Only 64% of relevant assessments of children and young people specifically took account of diversity needs.
- ◆ Just over half of the supervision plans in the inspection sample specified having taken into account diverse needs.

Key statistics

Assessment of YOT case files	YOT score	Average for phase two YOTs	Range for phase two YOTs	YJB targets ⁽¹⁾
	(% cases)			
Initial assessment completed in accordance with national standards requirements:				
– timeliness	65%	84%	70-97%	100%
– adequate quality	58%	71%	29-93%	
Full risk of harm to others completed on relevant cases	22%	54%	17-83%	
Evidence of management oversight in risk of harm cases	100%	41%	0-100%	
ISP meets the content requirements of national standards and contains SMART objectives	42%	52%	17-96%	100% ⁽²⁾
Frequency of appointments arranged broadly conform to national standards, to the requirements of order/licence, and to any risk of harm considerations	73%	75%	52-100%	
Judgements about acceptability/unacceptability of absences are appropriate	74%	71%	40-96%	
Breach/recall action has taken place, if required, within the national standards timescale	60%	49%	13-100%	
Evidence of any criminal activity during the course of the order	25%	29%	15-48%	
Appropriate action has been taken if a child or young person is considered vulnerable to harm from self and others.	100%	95%	67-100%	
Effective action is taken where there is evidence of educational difficulties	38%	60%	33-81%	90% ⁽³⁾
Appropriate referrals are made in cases of:				
– physical health	100%	n/a	n/a	
– mental/emotional health	86%	n/a	n/a	100% ⁽⁴⁾
– substance misuse	67%	n/a	n/a	100% ⁽⁵⁾
Victim was consulted about restorative/reparative justice work with child or young person	19%	45%	6-72%	

- (1) If appropriate.
- (2) Relates to detention and training plans.
- (3) In full-time ETE
- (4) CAMHS referrals.
- (5) Screening and referrals.

Key findings

- ◆ **Management** – Although a good range of partners were identified as members of the YOS Management Board, at the time of the inspection the Board was not fully functioning due to a number of personnel changes. Work had been done to improve the focus of the Board, including an increased emphasis on performance management, although attendance at the Board by some partners was poor. Plans were in place for the Director of Children’s Services to Chair the YOS Management Board.

Protocols existed with most statutory and voluntary partner agencies, and there was good service provision within the YOS by partners. Some areas of work had been under-resourced and the YOS was unable to adequately meet the level of need (e.g. for parenting and victim work). The staff and managers within the YOS were committed and positive in their work, and there were clear communication systems in place to ensure that all team members were kept informed and updated about local and national issues. All staff reported receiving regular, formal supervision, and there were numerous training methods employed by the YOS to meet the needs of staff members.

- ◆ **Work in the courts** – There were generally good relationships with the courts, and the court staff provided a comprehensive service. The bail work was timely and individually tailored to each child and young person. The quality of the PSRs was variable, and the format used within the YOS required amendment to bring it in line with the national standard. Overall, the work in the courts was judged to be good, although it was recognised that the YOS could do more to market the work of the YOS to the court personnel, and that court staff should receive ongoing training to keep them abreast of new developments.

- ◆ **Work with children and young people in the community** – The YOS did not have responsibility for prevention activity in Dudley, as this was provided through the Children’s Fund, while Dudley Connexions/Youth Service managed a PAYP programme. A YOS prevention strategy was incorporated into that of the Dudley Borough Council.

Work with children and young people who had offended was mostly conducted individually, and there were no systems in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions and services provided. Staff often did not record sufficient detail as to the nature of the work undertaken and the progress of the children and young people, and Assets were not always reviewed as required. The date of Asset completion had routinely been completed inaccurately for referral order cases, to reflect the required date rather than the actual completion date. The threshold for conducting full risk of harm

assessments had been set too high, with a consequence that some required assessments had not been undertaken.

The health and education needs of children and young people were generally met. Children and young people were not consulted about the services provided by the YOS, although the feedback received from children and young people during the inspection was positive. Parenting work was being developed within the YOS. At the time of the inspection, although parents/carers had mostly been involved in the initial assessment process of the children and young people, there was no voluntary parenting work available.

- ◆ **Work with children and young people subject to DTOs** – A core group of YOS staff managed the DTO cases within the YOS and liaised well with the YOIs and secure training centres, maintaining consistent involvement throughout the custodial and licence elements of the orders.
- ◆ **Victims and restorative justice** – There had been a period of months when a lack of resources identified within the YOS resulted in no service being available for victims during that time. The YOS still had a large task ahead in the development of a coherent approach to work with victims, although there was already evidence to indicate that this work was underway.

Recommendations

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that:

- ◇ an action plan is devised to address the following recommendations and forwarded to the lead inspector within three months of the publication of this report
- ◇ consistent attendance at the Management Board meetings is improved by all members, to facilitate effective multi-agency strategic management of the YOS
- ◇ resolution of the issues in relation to staffing new initiatives within the YOS should be given priority, in order that the important work areas can be taken forward.

The Head of Service should ensure that:

- ◇ up-to-date partnership protocols are developed between the YOS and probation, and between the YOS and the Directorate of Social Care for the management of children and young people remanded to local authority accommodation
- ◇ all partnership protocols are reviewed annually, and updated as appropriate
- ◇ YOS court staff receive adequate ongoing training to keep them abreast of new initiatives and developments relevant to their roles
- ◇ work is done to develop the quality of the PSR reports, and the PSR format is altered in order that it is consistent with that specified in the national standard
- ◇ a prevention strategy is developed by the YOS
- ◇ the quality of the content of completed initial Assets is improved, and all Assets are reviewed according to the national standard timescales
- ◇ the practice of amending the initial Asset date to fit with the court date ceases
- ◇ the threshold for completing full risk of harm assessments is amended to ensure that they are undertaken in all cases which require them, rather than in only the most serious
- ◇ work is done to develop the objectives set in the supervision plans, to make them more SMART, to include suitable victim and restorative processes, and to take into account the diverse needs of the children and young people
- ◇ voluntary parenting work is encouraged, and interventions and support services are developed for parents/carers
- ◇ consultation with children and young people is undertaken routinely
- ◇ victim work is given a higher priority with all types of orders, to maximise victims' contributions and satisfaction with the processes.

1. MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

1.1 Leadership

Key judgement:

- ◆ *The Management Board provides strategic oversight and direction, and coordinates the provision of youth justice services by the YOT and partner organisations.*

At the time of the inspection, the Dudley YOS was located within the Directorate of Social Care, and the Head of Service was managed by the Assistant Director of Children's Services. Restructuring within the council was underway to form a new Children's Services Directorate, and the position of the YOS within the new arrangements had not been determined. Previous changes to the location of the YOS within the council structure had originally placed it within the Directorate of Social Services and then within the Chief Executive's Department, prior to moving back to Social Services pending the creation of the Children's Services Directorate. The YOS Management Board had recently revised its terms of reference and membership to include the Connexions Commissioning Manager, the Head of Community Safety and the manager of the Zone, a young people's substance misuse service. Its role was to implement the Youth Justice Plan as well as meet local and national targets contained in the Community Safety Strategy. The Operational Management Team within the YOS had been restructured in the recent past and met monthly to discuss data quality and performance issues.

Strengths:

- ◆ The YOS Management Board was chaired by the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care, and it was planned that the Director of Children's Services would take over the role once the changes to the structure of the Directorate were finalised.
- ◆ Informal links between the YOS and the Chief Executive had been achieved through the Head of Service's attendance at the Safe and Sound Strategic Board which the Chief Executive chaired.
- ◆ The Safe and Sound Partnership's Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008 identified youth offending as a priority area of focus. A number of the YOS Performance Indicators were integral to the Community Safety Strategy.
- ◆ The YOS Management Board reported to the Safe and Sound Strategic Board, which set the broad strategic direction for the YOS.

- ◇ Changes to the YOS Management Board personnel and Chair had led to a recent decision to update and refocus the membership and content of the Management Board meetings. At the time of the inspection it was too early to adequately assess the impact of these changes, although the Chair anticipated that it would take a further six months for the Board to develop and become fully functioning.
- ◇ The Head of Service was very positive and solution-focused in his approach to both the strategic and operational management of the YOS.
- ◇ Involvement of the Head of Service with a range of strategic groups within the local authority ensured that the work of the YOS was integrated into that of the wider council. Amongst other forums, he attended the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Implementation Group; the Substance Misuse Implementation Group; the Crime Reduction Implementation Group; the Young People's Homelessness Strategy Group, and the CAMHS Strategic Group.
- ◇ Although there was no formal reporting structure to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Implementation Group for the YOS, the Head of Service attended the meetings and was able to raise specific issues with the group on an ad hoc basis.
- ◇ Strategic links between the YOS and the police were particularly strong, with police representatives having consistently attended and effectively contributed to the Management Board.
- ◇ There was evidence of a developing performance management culture within the YOS. The Head of Service gave information to the Board about areas of low performance, and presented possible solutions. The Management Board discussed the recommendations and either gave their support or passed the information to the Safe & Sound Strategic Board for their consideration.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ It had previously been arranged that the YOS would be linked formally to the Chief Executive of Dudley Borough Council via the attendance of the Head of Policy and Performance at the YOS Management Board meetings. However, this had not happened, as the Head of Policy and Performance had been unable to attend in the preceding months due to other work commitments. At the time of the inspection, it was the intention of the Director of Children's Services to take responsibility for chairing the Management Board in order to ensure that it was well represented at an appropriate level.
- ◇ There had been a high turnover of probation representatives at the YOS Management Board over the previous years. This had impacted on the quality of the partnership working.
- ◇ Attendance at the Management Board meetings had been inconsistent by many partners, with meetings having been cancelled due to poor attendance. It was anticipated that the refocus of the Management

Board meetings that had occurred shortly prior to the inspection would, over time, assist with improving the attendance at the meetings.

- ◇ The police and probation representatives on the YOS Management Board did not have full control over resources and decision making, ostensibly due to the size of their parent organisations. Whilst the Head of Service had attempted to counter this by developing communication links with the central managers and budget holders for West Midlands Probation Area and West Midlands Police, the Head of Service perceived Dudley YOS to be at a disadvantage (in terms of attracting additional resources or support) as compared to other larger services within the West Midlands.
- ◇ The Head of Service was the prime problem-solver in relation to YOS resource and service delivery issues, with the Management Board being less active in the process. As the Management Board group had been relatively newly established as a collective, the partners had yet to develop active roles in problem solving, using resources and skills from their own agencies to assist the Head of Service effectively.

1.2 Partnership and resources

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Partner organisations and the YOT work together to deter children and young people from offending.*

A general protocol existed for the secondment of staff from both statutory and voluntary organisations to the YOS. Additionally, up-to-date deployment/secondment agreements and protocols were in place with the majority of specific partner agencies with whom Dudley YOS engaged. Partnership resources within the YOS had remained consistent for the past four years except for inflationary uplifts.

Strengths:

- ◇ Although the Youth Justice Plan did not explicitly reflect partner strategies, the delivery plan linked to others by name, which enabled cross-referencing.
- ◇ The Head of Service was a member of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board. The YOS also engaged with partners in joint tasking to target specific offence types through the Crime Reduction Implementation Group.
- ◇ There was an information sharing protocol for the Safe and Sound Community Safety partners, which was used by the YOS, although it had not been signed by all invited parties and required review.

- ◆ The education provision within the YOS at both pre- and post-16 stages was good. Young people referred to the YOS benefited greatly from the effective work of the education worker, the Connexions PA and support from a learning mentor employed by the Black Country KYPE project. These staff worked cooperatively to provide a range of effective interventions and placements for children and young people experiencing educational difficulties.
- ◆ There were good working relationships between Connexions and the YOS. One PA worked full-time in the YOS, predominantly with post-16 year olds. A further PA worked as part of KYPE, exclusively with ISSP and DTO cases.
- ◆ Excellent partnerships existed with the Zone, who offered a support, information, counselling, treatment and aftercare service to children and young people with problematic substance misuse.
- ◆ There was a strong input from CAMHS to the YOS, with a CPN working within the YOS.
- ◆ An enthusiastic and committed accommodation officer was employed in the YOS, and had developed an exciting and innovative service for children and young people within Dudley, in partnership with Dudley Housing Department and Heantun Housing. The services included a range of furnished duplex flats specifically for children and young people who had offended, and a 'crash-pad' service (supported with funding from the ODPM) allowing children and young people to spend brief periods of time away from their normal residency and facilitate mediation to build relationships with family members.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ At the time of the inspection, problems in staffing new initiatives within the YOS without additional resources were being discussed with the Management Board and Safe and Sound Strategic Board. A quick resolution of this issue was required in order that the YOS was able to effectively resource the delivery of fundamental work areas.
- ◆ There was no up-to-date partnership protocol between the YOS and probation. The secondment arrangements with West Midlands Probation Area had been inadequate, with seconded staff having been effectively cut-off from the probation area during the secondment period. This issue had been recognised by both parties and work was being done to improve the situation.
- ◆ Some of the partnership protocols with statutory and voluntary agencies were out of date and needed to be reviewed and updated.
- ◆ An additional substance misuse worker was needed within the YOS, as the lone worker was unable to meet the level of need for substance misuse assessment and interventions within the YOS at the time of the inspection.

- ◇ Parenting work and victims work had not been adequately resourced and this had led to some restructuring in the YOS and the loss of a youth worker post in order to provide a parenting support post.
- ◇ The YOS had been unable to resource the significant increase in the need for sessional support to deliver reparation activity, due to the implementation of referral orders within the team.
- ◇ At the time of the inspection, the ISSP team had not been fully staffed, with the deputy coordinator acting down to cover one of the vacant senior practitioner roles as well as having been required to deliver their own work. A second vacant senior practitioner post existed in the North group of the consortium.
- ◇ There was too much work for one accommodation officer to manage effectively alone. At the time of the inspection, the accommodation officer was seriously overstretched in terms of workload.
- ◇ The YOS was unable to evidence the effectiveness of the services available. This caused difficulties in ensuring that services were providing value for money in relation to positive outcomes for children and young people.

1.3 Staff supervision, development and training

Key judgement:

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

The YOS worked to defined procedures relating to practice areas. One of the operational managers had responsibility for the preparation and revision of policies, protocols and procedures and service level agreements, whilst another was responsible for staff support, supervision and training. The third operational manager was responsible for all duty matters, allocation and gatekeeping as well as line management. The Performance Review and Development record (PRD), developed by the Chief Executive's Directorate of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, was used within the YOS for those staff employed directly by the council. There was a team training plan for July 2005 – June 2006 which identified the month-by-month scheduled training programme over the 12 month period. It was an expectation that all staff would work towards the Professional Certificate in Effective Practice (PCEP), and this had been achieved by a number of staff while others were waiting to start.

Strengths:

- ◇ The staff team was positive and enthusiastic about their work within Dudley YOS. The location of the YOS within one building increased the ease with which team members could communicate, and enabled all staff to be supported within their roles.

- ◇ All staff reported having regular, formal and structured supervision with their line managers. This was described as beneficial and was minuted to provide a record of the content of the discussions. There was also informal ad hoc supervision available from managers or peers as required.
- ◇ Appraisals were completed annually and included a focus on the developmental needs of staff, in order that all individual training needs were identified. Whilst appraisals were formally reviewed every six months, the monthly supervision provided the forum for more regular checks.
- ◇ Training methods employed by the YOS were varied, with evidence of considerable individual coaching and support through line management supervision in order to develop the skills of staff. Additionally, group training was delivered for certain subjects (e.g. MAPPA and PSR writing). Operational managers were routinely available to provide advice and assistance for practitioners, in such areas as risk assessment, for example.
- ◇ A member of the administrative team offered ongoing IT training and support for all new members of the YOS as well as others who requested assistance with either YOIS+ or hardware problems. This helped to ensure that all members of the team completed YOIS+ in a consistent manner, and that computer problems were fixed quickly and efficiently.
- ◇ A comprehensive induction programme was used for all new staff in the YOS. This consisted of a week of scheduled appointments with managers and other team members in order to familiarise the inductee with the work of the YOS. In addition, a pack was provided for the individual to work through.
- ◇ There was a range of good communication structures in place within the YOS, which fostered a spirit of openness and collaboration. YOS staff briefing meetings occurred weekly, and full team meetings were held every six weeks, with teams within the YOS having meetings monthly. Two away-days were held each year for the entire staff group. The first of these focused on a review of the previous year's performance and consulted on proposals for service delivery changes. The second away-day provided an opportunity for a mid-term review of progress against the planned targets.
- ◇ All staff were kept abreast of changes and developments in relation to procedures and systems used by the YOS. Emails, training groups, staff briefings and ongoing support enabled staff to understand the new requirements in their working practices.
- ◇ All staff had CRB checks completed at appointment, and the checks were reviewed in accordance with Dudley Borough Council's policy every three years.
- ◇ The Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure adopted by the Directorate of Social Care was used within the YOS.

- ◇ The partnership protocols in operation with the YOS included procedures for dealing with disciplinary, capability and grievance issues.
- ◇ There was a YOS procedural guidance document in draft form which pertained to maintaining personal safety whilst lone working. This complemented the council document relating to the same issue and was due for review in June 2006.
- ◇ The YOS worked to the health and safety procedures in use within the council. The business support and information manager had overall responsibility for health and safety within the YOS, with some delegated responsibilities in the administrative team. Whilst the Head of Service did undertake checks on health and safety, it was acknowledged that this was not done formally.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ The YOS recognised that the operational manager with responsibility for policy and performance management for the YOS needed to give the work more focus, although it was clear that the post-holder had a number of other weighty areas of management work which took their attention away from policy development and review.
- ◇ The task of managing the way the YOS undertook staff support, supervision and training was an enormous one for the operational manager responsible, especially as that was only one part of their management role. It was felt that the development of a training coordinator post, split across the four Black Country YOS teams, could have provided increased opportunities for sharing training expertise and reducing the costs incurred by individual YOS teams buying in training from external providers.
- ◇ Although all volunteers and sessional workers undertook training on appointment, the system for ongoing training for volunteers to the YOS needed to be improved to maximise attendance and participation.

Good practice

All new staff received an induction pack, which included a range of helpful information relating to human resource matters, contact details and an organisational chart. It also contained a range of policies and procedures including the Youth Justice Plan. Additionally, there was a milestone checklist for the inductee to complete with their line manager as they successfully undertook tasks and received the required information during their first week and then at specified intervals up to the end of their first month in post. This ensured that nothing was missed, and assisted in the orientation of the new starters to their roles.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT

This section is judged as adequate.

2.

WORK IN THE COURTS

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Good working relationships exist between the YOT and the local court.*

There were youth court centres in Dudley and Halesowen/Stourbridge, and Wolverhampton Crown Court was served by the YOS. The Head of Service was a member of the Court User Groups and the Youth Court User Groups for both courts. The YOS was also invited to the Youth Panel of Magistrates meetings in order to share information about service development.

Strengths:

- ◆ There was an up-to-date comprehensive Youth Justice Service Agreement between the Black Country courts and the four services within the area (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton). A Black Country Crown Court protocol also existed, which specified the responsibilities of the court officer in relation to work at Crown Court.
- ◆ There was appropriate staffing available to cover the court work with specific YOS staff taking responsibility for serving the courts via a combination of part-time and full-time court working arrangements. At the time of the inspection, staff had been drawn from the main team to cover the maternity leave of the full-time court duty officer. The bail support officer worked full-time and other staff provided duty court officer cover to the courts on certain days each week.
- ◆ A service was provided to Saturday and bank holiday courts by the bail support officer. This consistency of cover was highly regarded by the external court staff.
- ◆ Although there was no formal court training for YOS court staff new to the role, they felt comfortable with the observational and experiential training they received.
- ◆ Attendance at the Youth Court User Group was delegated to an operational manager. The content of the meetings was fed back to the court staff in their Court Workers' meetings.
- ◆ YOS staff attended Youth Court Panel meetings, providing training for external court staff in relation to new service developments.

Good practice

Two Wolverhampton Crown Court judges attended one of the Law and Offending sessions of the ISSP. They met group workers involved in the programme and a two-way question and answer discussion was held. The event led to an uptake of referrals for ISSP from the judges in the subsequent months.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The quality of the linkage between the YOS Management Board and the court required improvement. The court representation on the YOS Management Board had not been consistent over the previous months.
- ◆ There was a lack of adequate ongoing training for YOS court staff to keep them updated about new initiatives and developments relevant to their roles.
- ◆ Whilst there was some input to magistrates and other court staff, the YOS could have done more to ensure that they had a clear and up-to-date understanding of the full range of services provided by the YOS.
- ◆ There was no mechanism for sharing feedback and specific outcomes with the court staff in relation to the children and young people dealt with through the courts. The court staff indicated that they would have welcomed such feedback.
- ◆ Communication systems with the courts did not appear to have been fully effective, with some magistrates being unaware of new developments in relation to feedback about PSR quality. This had led to them not engaging with the task and the YOS not receiving the information requested.

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Effective practice with children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT within the courts.*

Strengths:

- ◆ Secure email had recently been set up between the courts and the YOS. This helped the flow of information and increased the efficiency of work practices.
- ◆ There was a protocol in place between the YOS, the youth courts, the CP, defence solicitors, West Midlands Police and Dudley Social Services Directorate to manage the procedures for court-ordered secure remands.
- ◆ In the sample assessed during the inspection, all children and young people who were made the subject of community sentences or bail supervision and support programmes had their first appointments within one working day of the court appearance.

- ◇ Bail Assets were completed by the bail support officer for all children and young people at court. Any concerns identified in relation to vulnerability were communicated to the secure establishment via the YJB 'Essential Information for Custodial Facilities' envelope. This would be followed up with a phone call to the secure establishment to ensure the pack had arrived.

Area for improvement:

- ◇ YOS staff complained of a lack of facilities at Halesowen youth court. They reported that the lack of office space sometimes impacted on the ability of staff to see the children and young people at the required time, or led to the interviews taking place in open areas that were not conducive to sensitive discussions.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Children and young people are safeguarded and the likelihood of their further offending reduced by the provision of appropriate services, including bail supervision and support programmes.*

Strengths:

- ◇ There was a comprehensive document outlining remand management procedures (dated August 2005) for the YOS.
- ◇ The bail support officer identified those children and young people at risk of secure or custodial remand using the Bail Asset and discussions with court staff in relation to the case.
- ◇ Bail packages were individually tailored to reflect the needs of the children and young people as highlighted by the Bail Asset. The expertise of specialist staff within the YOS was used where required to assist the implementation of the packages.
- ◇ Follow-up services were provided by the bail support officer, who visited those children and young people who were securely remanded, and made assessments for further bail applications where appropriate.

Area for improvement:

- ◇ There was no specific protocol in place between the YOS and the Directorate of Social Care for the management of children and young people remanded to local authority accommodation.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Courts are assisted in making informed decisions by the provision of good quality reports from the YOT.*

Strengths:

- ◇ 90% of the PSRs in the inspection sample were completed within national standard timeframes. All of the PSRs in the sample identified that the child or young person had been interviewed at least once, specifically for the report.
- ◇ Parents/carers were interviewed in 80% of the cases for which this was considered to have been appropriate.
- ◇ 70% of the reports contained information obtained from all relevant sources.
- ◇ The 'Assessment of the Young Person' section of the reports contained sufficient and appropriate relevant information in 90% of cases.
- ◇ The majority of the reports were identified as being free from discriminatory language and stereotypes (87%), were satisfactorily verified and factually accurate (89%) and were satisfactorily understandable by the child or young person (94%).
- ◇ Attention was paid to the vulnerability of the child or young person (i.e. risk of harm from self or others) in all of the reports assessed.
- ◇ The conclusions of all reports contained clear proposals for sentencing, which was commensurate with the seriousness of the offence in all but one of the reports.
- ◇ There was a 68% concordance between the proposal made and the sentence imposed.
- ◇ At the time of the inspection, YOS staff had just completed training in PSR writing.
- ◇ There was a gatekeeping process in place which necessitated each completed PSR being checked by an operational manager against a checklist of standard areas to be included in the reports. Feedback was provided to the report writer, and where required, individual support or training was offered to members of staff during their supervision.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ It was not always clear that the reports were based on the Asset assessment (only 40% of the sample had been identified as having been clearly based on the Asset completed for the child or young person).
- ◇ The PSR format used by Dudley YOS was not consistent with that specified in the national standard. The YOS used the sub-heading

'Offender assessment' rather than 'Assessment of young person', and 'Assessment of risk to the community, including the risk of re-offending and self-harm', rather than 'Assessment of risk to the community, including the risk of re-offending and harm'.

- ◇ 65% of the cases inspected included a description of the offence(s) rather than an analysis.
- ◇ There was insufficient attendance to the issue of the child or young person's maturity impacting on their ability to understand the consequences of their actions. Over half of the reports had not explicitly considered this.
- ◇ The impact of the offence on the victim(s) was adequately addressed in only 41% of the cases assessed.
- ◇ Although all of the children and young people for whom safeguarding issues were identified in the Asset had them included in the report, the way the report addressed safeguarding was only satisfactory in 60% of the cases.
- ◇ Diversity was addressed satisfactorily in only half of the cases.
- ◇ The 'Assessment of risk to the community, including risk of re-offending and harm' section of the report did not appropriately differentiate between risk of harm and likelihood of reoffending in nine of the 20 reports assessed.
- ◇ In 12 of the 20 reports, the way in which risk of harm issues were addressed was unsatisfactory.
- ◇ The quality of the PSR reports was variable, with 55% being assessed as unsatisfactory and 45% as satisfactory overall.
- ◇ The use of feedback forms by magistrates on PSR quality and usefulness should be re-launched and actively encouraged by YOS staff.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK IN THE COURTS

This section is judged as good.

3. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

3.1 Work with children and young people at risk of offending

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Children and young people are prevented from offending.*

The YOS did not have responsibility for prevention activity in Dudley. A YISP had been provided through the Children's Fund, and Dudley Connexions/Youth Service managed a PAYP programme. The YOS worked closely with the agencies providing prevention work.

Strengths:

- ◇ A youth worker within the YOS team linked to the PAYP programme, supporting children and young people as necessary.
- ◇ The YOS had taken the lead on the Prevent and Deter strand of the Prolific and other Priority Offender Strategy.
- ◇ Research had been commissioned by the YOS into the extent of prevention activity across the borough.
- ◇ A young person's community safety coordinator post had been funded by Community Safety within the council. The post-holder was dynamic and enthusiastic and had developed an impressive range of services to provide information and advice to young people in Dudley who were at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. The work had included giving sessions at ten of the 22 local secondary schools and having information stands at colleges and local club nights about community safety.

Area for improvement:

- ◇ The commissioned research found that prevention work was being undertaken in an un-coordinated way across the borough, with little or no evidence of targeting, assessment or evaluation of effectiveness. Work was being undertaken to address these findings.

Good practice

The young person's community safety coordinator had worked with a group of young people in Dudley to design and produce a magazine for young people about staying safe. Extensive consultation had taken place with the young people in the area in order to ensure that the design and content of the magazine would be accessible and useful to them. The magazine was professionally produced and included a range of informative articles and activities, written by the young people, and had been distributed around the local area.

3.2 Work with children and young people who have offended

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Children and young people who have offended are prevented from reoffending.*

Dudley YOS was managed by a Head of Service and three operational managers. The administration team was led by the business support and information manager, who was line managed by the administration manager in the Directorate of Children's Services. The referral order team was managed by the referral order coordinator, and reported directly to the YOS Head of Service. The Head of Service for Dudley managed the ISSP project on behalf of the Black Country Partners, which was a joint partnership arrangement across the four Black Country services.

Strengths:

- ◆ 30 of the 32 initial Assets examined had involved the child or young person in the assessment.
- ◆ Supervision plans, where required, had all been completed in accordance with the national standard timescale, with clear evidence that steps had been taken to ensure the child or young person understood the requirements of the order or licence.
- ◆ There was a close fit between the interventions planned and the assessed risk of harm in all relevant cases, and appropriate interventions had been carried out, proportionate to the child or young person's risk of harm and likelihood of reoffending in 80% of cases.
- ◆ Case managers actively reinforced the work undertaken by others with the children and young people in 14 of the 20 relevant cases. There was also good evidence of liaison between the case manager and those people providing interventions in 74% of cases.
- ◆ In 74% of cases examined, the judgements about acceptability/unacceptability of absences were found to be appropriate.

- ◆ First appointments with the children and young people, following a community order, had taken place within one working day of the court appearance in 90% of cases.
- ◆ Despite staffing shortages (mentioned in section 1.2 above), the ISSP project had been exceeding capacity in the high intensity phase of the programme at the time of the inspection, with 28 children and young people on high intensity intervention, with a capacity of 25.
- ◆ Although the core group work programme for ISSP had been developed to be suitable for white male or afro-caribbean post-15/16 year old young people, the interventions available within ISSP were varied and had included groups to address the diverse needs of the children and young people on the programme. A programme for girls and young women had been delivered, as well as a specific group called the Young Black Men's Group, formed to address an apparent trend in young black men having been excluded from a programme designed for children and young people who had committed robbery. Whilst this group had not been evaluated, the feedback from the participants had been positive and it was planned to be delivered again.
- ◆ The ISSP project had face-to-face contact sessions at the weekends, which had contributed to a very high level of compliance when the level had previously been substantially lower. Additionally, staff had collected children and young people on Sundays to take them to the groups, which had also improved compliance.
- ◆ A range of interventions were available for children and young people within the YOS, including COPS (a motor vehicle crime prevention programme); anger management, and work in conjunction with the NSPCC Black Country Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour Project for children and young people who had engaged in sexually harmful behaviour.
- ◆ The majority of interventions delivered to children and young people within the YOS were undertaken on a one-to-one basis, following the decision not to replace the youth worker, who had previously run groups with children and young people and liaised with and delivered PAYP. JIGSAW was being introduced within the YOS as a tool for engaging with individual children and young people in a structured and consistent way.
- ◆ The final warnings system had altered shortly before the inspection, removing the responsibility for the delivery of the final warnings from inspectors at police stations. The role of the seconded police officers in the YOS had changed in order that they could administer the final warnings within the YOS, as well as undertaking the Asset assessment and agreeing and delivering the interventions with the children and young people and their parents/carers as appropriate. In nine of the ten final warning cases examined as part of the inspection sample, the final warning had been delivered within 20 working days of the decision.

- ◆ 67% of the referral order panels sat within 20 working days of the order being made, and a written report had been prepared for the panel in all cases seen in the inspection sample. In 89% of cases the contracts had taken into account the specific issues in relation to the children and young people in setting the contract, and in 90% of the cases seen, the contract had been delivered in accordance with the agreed requirements.
- ◆ The reparation team demonstrated a clear commitment to their work and wanted to expand the range of placements available for children and young people. They worked hard to try to match the placements with the needs of the children and young people, and liaised with the parents/carers throughout the process.
- ◆ The YOS performed well on the YJB target to reduce offending by 5% by 2005, with a 17% reduction in offending having been achieved.

Good practice

A method of documenting structured sessions was being introduced within the YOS, which clearly identified the purpose of the intervention and the methods used, outcomes from the session, and a description of any feedback obtained from the child or young person. The record also included the next steps in the process, as well as specifying the next appointment date. This structured and focused approach to working with children and young people and documenting the work was a positive progression for the YOS.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ 65% of the initial Assets scrutinised in the inspection sample had been completed in accordance with the national standard timescale and 58% were considered to be of good quality. Case managers interviewed for Referral Order cases indicated that they had routinely put the date of completion of the Asset as the date the assessment was required, even when the assessment had not been completed until later.
- ◆ Only 64% of relevant assessments took into account specific needs of the children and young people in relation to diversity.
- ◆ Self-assessments from the children and young people were not routinely undertaken to inform the assessment process. Involvement of the children and young people was limited to their attendance at supervision planning and review meetings.
- ◆ The Asset had been reviewed at required intervals in only nine of the 21 relevant cases within the inspection sample that had required review.
- ◆ Interviews with case managers revealed that engagement with the children and young people was creative and constructive, although the content of the sessions and outcomes of interventions were often not documented within the case records.

- ◇ Seven of the nine cases for which a full risk of harm assessment had been required had not had it completed. In addition to which, in 50% of the cases for which no risk of harm indicators were present, the inspection team did not agree that there was insufficient/no reason to complete a full assessment. Discussions with staff and managers at the YOS indicated that the threshold for completing full risk of harm assessments had been set too high, with only those children and young people who had exhibited very serious acts of violence being considered appropriate for completion of a full risk of harm assessment, rather than indicators of any level of violence triggering a full assessment.
- ◇ The Risk Management Policy relied on the standard review process to ensure that the risk of harm assessment was up-to-date and pertinent. There was no reference to the reassessment of risk of harm, out of the normal Asset review process, in cases where new behaviour indicative of risk of harm to others had been displayed by a child or young person during their contact with the YOS.
- ◇ Only 42% of supervision plans/training review plans seen during the inspection had met the content requirements of national standards and contained SMART objectives. 42% of the supervision plans did not contain suitable victim and restorative processes, and the plans had only taken into account diversity needs of the children and young people in just over half the cases examined.
- ◇ In all of the final warning cases examined as part of the inspection sample, the YOS had been working to the old system of delivery of the final warning by the local inspector. Whilst the police had notified the YOS within one working day of children and young people who had received final warnings, in less than half of the cases the assessment of the child or young person had not been undertaken within ten working days of notification by the police.
- ◇ In nine of the ten final warning cases in the sample, there had been no evidence that the victim had been invited to become involved in the final warning process.
- ◇ There was a low take-up rate for victims attending referral order panels, with only one victim attending out of the ten referral order cases which had formed the inspection sample.
- ◇ There was no evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions used within the YOS, including those delivered as part of ISSP.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *The health of children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT.*

Health workers, drug and alcohol workers and a CPN contributed to the work of the YOS as part of the multi-agency team. The Zone had a formal

partnership with the YOS and provided the substance misuse service for under 18s in the Dudley Borough Council. Links to CAMHS were via the Zone and health workers within the YOS.

Strengths:

- ◆ The health staff worked within the YOS as part of the multi-agency team. This meant that referrals for children and young people to services, and communication with case managers about children and young people accessing the services, was effective, with information being shared quickly.
- ◆ Appropriate referrals were made to specialists in all of the required cases within the inspection sample, and the assessments were undertaken within target timescales.
- ◆ The Zone provided a range of group work and individual work for children and young people within the YOS.
- ◆ A protocol existed between the YOS and the Elms, a health centre, which defined the role of the CPN within the YOS team in relation to CAMHS provision.

Good practice

A first time offender with a six month referral order was diagnosed with diabetes, which flared up soon after the order commenced. The decision was taken that the young person should delay the completion of reparation hours until his diabetes was under control. The YOS worker undertook home visits rather than holding appointments at the YOS. The management of the case demonstrated sensitivity to the health needs of the young person, whilst effectively balancing the requirements of the order.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ There appeared to be a higher demand for substance misuse services within the YOS than one drug worker could effectively manage.

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Children and young people who have offended are safeguarded through the work of the YOT.*

Strengths:

- ◆ There was good liaison between the YOS and Children's Social Care for both Looked After Children and those cases in the inspection sample who were not categorised as Looked After Children.
- ◆ Staff within the YOS had undertaken child protection training.
- ◆ Appropriate action was taken in all cases in the inspection sample in which children or young people were considered vulnerable to harm from themselves or from others.

- ◇ Detailed information sharing protocols were available that specified the way in which partner agencies were expected to work together.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ There was no documented YOS protocol to define the contribution of the YOS in Looked After cases.
- ◇ There were no services available specifically for Looked After Children who had offended.

Key judgement:

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

There was an education worker, financed by a contribution from the LEA, located within the YOS. The Black Country KYPE project employed a Connexions PA and a learning mentor to work with those children and young people on ISSP, or who had a DTO.

Strengths:

- ◇ The extent of education provision at the YOS was good.
- ◇ Close links existed with the LEA via the Inclusion Department, SEN section and the Education Support Service, which worked with Looked After Children.
- ◇ Specialist assessments were undertaken on those children and young people with specific educational needs. There was close working between the YOS case managers and the PA, with a good transfer of information at the end of compulsory schooling.
- ◇ Good systems had been established across the service from assessment through to review and end Asset with pre-16 year old children and young people. 91% of the pre-16 year old children and young people within the YOS were in ETE at the end of the quarter in September 2005.
- ◇ There was one pre-E2E provision, funded by an ESF bid and delivered by a voluntary organisation, although there were too few places and young people were reluctant to travel across the borough to access it.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ Placements for young people at the local colleges were problematic, with specific enrolment dates sometimes resulting in young people having to wait for some considerable time.
- ◇ At the post-16 age range, some good individual work had been undertaken, enabling some young people to access a range of education and training placements, although the shortage of placements and reluctance of some organisations to accept young

people who had offended had impacted on the overall effectiveness of this approach. Only 53% of a cohort of 116 post-16 year old children and young people were in ETE at the end of September 2005.

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Outcomes for children and young people are improved by their involvement through consultation about the services provided by the YOT.*

The young person's community safety coordinator consulted with the children and young people of Dudley.

Strength:

- ◆ 55 children and young people completed an interactive or paper questionnaire, or were interviewed face-to-face by the inspection team about the service provided to them by the YOS. This indicated a good level of engagement between the YOS staff and the children and young people.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ In 63% of the inspection cases there was no evidence that the children and young people had completed a *What Do You Think?* form or an alternative.
- ◆ There was no formal mechanism to consult with children and young people about the services obtained by the YOS.

Good practice

Feedback from the children and young people at the time of the inspection indicated that the YOS:

- *"gave me information"*
- *"helped and listened to me"*
- *"treated me alright"*
- *"listen to me when I have a problem"*
- *"got me thinking about what I had done."*

Other children and young people said:

- *"I'm healthier, I have put on two stone and I feel fitter, and I am going to school"*
- *"my YOT has made me realise what a foolish thing I did and it's not worth getting into trouble as it has upset my parents and family and I don't want to do that again."*

3.3 Work with parents/carers

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Parents/carers are supported in addressing their children's offending.*

The YOS had recently secured the services of a YJB consultant to assist in the development of parenting services within the YOS. At the time of the inspection they had been in the process of recruiting a parenting coordinator to take forward the work.

Strengths:

- ◇ There were new policy, procedure and practice guidelines in place in relation to parenting interventions with those parents/carers made subject to a parenting order within Dudley, as well as those parents/carers who had expressed difficulties in dealing with their child or young person's offending. At the time of the inspection these had not been fully implemented, but the document was explicit and described the range of tiered provision of services for parents/carers to match their assessed needs.
- ◇ At the time of the inspection there were three parenting orders being managed within the YOS, with a specific member of staff taking responsibility for undertaking the parenting work with those cases.
- ◇ The YOS had begun to clarify the extent of available services for parenting interventions across the area, although at the time of the inspection this work had not yet concluded.

- ◊ The majority of relevant inspection cases had involved parents/carers in the initial assessment process of the children and young people, with the assessments having reflected any specific and individual needs of the children or young people identified by the parents/carers.
- ◊ 89% of cases examined contained clear evidence that the parents/carers had been kept informed of any developments with the child or young person throughout the order.

Areas for improvement:

- ◊ There had been inadequate resources targeted at the development of parenting work within the YOS. Although this position had been changing around the time of the inspection, it was too early to establish the impact of the increased emphasis on parenting interventions.
- ◊ There was no provision of formalised voluntary parenting work within the YOS, but it was apparent that some case managers had been engaging in parenting work although not adequately recording it.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

This section is judged as adequate.

4.

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DTOs

Key judgement:

- ◇ *The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by assessment.*

The DTO cases in Dudley YOS were shared amongst a core group of two and a half staff posts, covering all aspects of the DTO work during the custody and licence elements of the orders.

Strengths:

- ◇ Initial Assets were completed by the case workers. These were contained within the court duty file for the court duty officer to forward to the secure estate for all children and young people receiving DTOs. Additionally, other relevant information was consistently communicated by the YOS within 24 hours of the children or young person's arrival. Telephone calls were made by YOS staff the following day to confirm arrival of the assessment information.
- ◇ In all six of the cases examined during the inspection there was evidence that the Assets reflected the individual needs of the children and young people.
- ◇ The child or young person was involved in the assessment process in all inspection cases.
- ◇ Evidence consistently demonstrated the involvement of the YOS workers in all of the training plan meetings (initial, review and final) for all six cases in the sample. The YOS DTO staff routinely used Asset at the training plan meetings to inform the objective setting. The YOS staff attended all meetings, even when children and young people were placed in secure establishments considerable distances away. This demonstrated the clear commitment and enthusiasm of the DTO staff to their work within the YOS.
- ◇ In five of the DTO cases in the inspection sample there was evidence that the views of education and the PCT were represented at the initial planning meeting.
- ◇ The local authority social worker attended the initial planning meeting for the one case that was of a Looked After Child.
- ◇ In two of the six cases, the child or young person had been assessed as having been vulnerable to harm from self or others. Both of these

cases had demonstrated appropriate action having been taken by the YOS to address the issues.

- ◇ A draft accommodation protocol (dated November 2005) was in place, which specified the arrangements for multi-agency working with children and young people entering or returning from custodial establishments. The protocol was explicit and clearly spelled out the responsibilities of each agency.

Area for improvement:

- ◇ In two of the cases reviewed there had been no full risk of serious harm assessments undertaken for the child or young person who had received a DTO, although there had been relevant indicators to trigger the full assessments in both.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by contact with the child or young person and effective liaison with the secure establishment during the custodial period.*

Strengths:

- ◇ YOS staff attended all sentence planning review meetings for their cases. The reviews were timetabled at the commencement of the order to maximise the availability of all relevant agencies as well as the attendance of parents/carers.
- ◇ In order to ensure that the sentence planning meetings were fully responsive to the needs of the children and young people, the attendance at the meetings was determined by the most recent Asset assessment. When a particular need was identified for the children and young people the YOS worker identified the relevant agency to attend the subsequent meetings to provide assessment and intervention.
- ◇ A Connexions PA worked as part of the KYPE initiative, working exclusively with children and young people subject to DTOs or who were on the ISSP.
- ◇ The YOS staff working with DTO cases worked hard to encourage the parents/carers of children and young people in custody to attend the planning meetings, sometimes personally transporting them many miles to and from reviews in order that they could be involved.
- ◇ There was a system of regular meetings with the main secure establishment to which children and young people from Dudley YOS were sent, in order to discuss process issues and any areas of concern in relation to the working arrangements.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ There was no protocol in place to define the working relationship between the YOS and the YOIs. This had contributed to inconsistent practices with different establishments and made it difficult for demarcation of responsibilities and accountabilities to be clearly understood.
- ◇ The success of the YOS in communicating effectively with key people at the secure establishments was variable across the different institutions. This was widely accepted by the YOS staff as having been due to differing resources across specific YOIs, which impacted on the availability of the staff to organise reviews and attend planning meetings.
- ◇ The arrangements for the management of sentence planning meetings within the YOIs served by Dudley YOS had been variable. Differing demands had been placed on YOS staff by the various establishments (from chairing all meetings, to all meetings being the responsibility of YOI staff).

Key judgement:

- ◇ *The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by reintegration into the community.*

Strengths:

- ◇ Dates of the first community review meetings were always set at the last custodial review meeting in order to ensure that they consistently took place within the required timescales. This was borne out by the sample, within which all training plans were satisfactorily reviewed within ten days of release, and subsequently on a three-monthly basis or at the end of the order if sooner.
- ◇ The accommodation officer within the YOS was responsible for assessing and monitoring the housing needs of all children and young people. Evidence from all six inspection cases indicated that this work had been undertaken effectively.
- ◇ Four of the cases examined included clear evidence that the learning plan had been continued following release from custody, and had been reviewed, updated and shared with relevant providers.
- ◇ In all but one case, the interventions that began in custody to address offending behaviour, health, safeguarding and education were continued in the community following release of the child or young person.
- ◇ Following release from the custodial element of their DTOs, those children and young people who were eligible were taken onto ISSP,

which provided a structured and in-depth programme of activities and interventions during their licence period.

- ◆ The amount of contact with the children and young people on release from custody was consistent in the majority of cases with the national standard and the Home Office/YJB guidance in relation to the requirements of the license and any risk of harm considerations.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ There was no specific protocol in place in relation to enforcement practices within the YOS.
- ◆ Three of the six children and young people had not complied with the conditions of the order/licence, including any additional requirements where appropriate.

Key judgement:

- ◆ *The YOT demonstrates positive outcomes in its work with children and young people subject to DTOs.*

Strength:

- ◆ Five of the six relevant DTO files inspected showed improvement in the overall Asset score from the initial score at the start of the DTO.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Two of the six cases examined included evidence that the child or young person had engaged in criminal activity while on the order/licence up to the time of the inspection.
- ◆ Feedback was not provided to the YOIs served by Dudley in relation to the outcomes for children and young people completing custodial sentences and returning to the community to be managed by the YOS.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DTOS

This section is judged as adequate.

5.

VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Victims of children and young people who have offended feel that they have been assisted by the intervention of the YOT in achieving closure.*

Historically, the police seconded within the YOS had undertaken the victims work to a high standard. However, the responsibility had been removed from them due to alterations in their roles. Following a gap in service delivery, a victim liaison officer had been employed approximately four months prior to the inspection. A victim's and restorative justice strategy had been in development within the YOS, following the redirection of resources from other areas to fund the work.

Strengths:

- ◇ The victim liaison officer received the court results from the administrative staff before passing the information to the police, requesting the victim details. The victim liaison officer then wrote to all victims explaining the services available, and this contact was subsequently followed up by either a telephone call or a further letter.
- ◇ The majority of the victims contacted had expressed a wish for further contact with the victim liaison officer. The numbers of victims that the YOS had been in contact with was not accurately captured by the comparatively low attendance of victims at panels.
- ◇ There was a sensitive and secure separate filing system for victim details, which was only accessible by specific staff.
- ◇ The victim liaison officer recorded relevant information on YOIS that had been received from contact with the victims about the children and young people. This enabled the children and young people's case managers to address specific issues where necessary.
- ◇ A reparation coordinator managed the community reparation projects with, sessional workers accompanying the children and young people for reparation activities.
- ◇ Community reparation had taken place in fifteen of the 32 relevant inspection cases examined, with 80% of the community reparation (12 out of 15) cases having commenced within the first three months of the order.
- ◇ Where victim work was undertaken by the YOS it took into account the individual diversity needs of the children and young people (where appropriate) in the majority of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- ◊ The YOS had identified the need to develop a comprehensive strategy in relation to work with victims within the YOS.
- ◊ Only four of the 21 relevant case files examined during the inspection showed evidence of consultation with the victim about any reparation or restorative justice work with the child or young person.
- ◊ The restorative interventions were, only exceptionally, tailored to the needs of the victims.
- ◊ Direct reparation was seen in only one of the 32 relevant cases from the inspection sample. Indirect reparation was evident in five cases examined during the inspection.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This section is judged as inadequate.

The joint inspection of YOTs

The joint inspection of YOTs is an independent programme, funded by the Home Office and reporting to the Secretary of State. Inspections are conducted jointly, involving CSCI, Estyn, the Healthcare Commission, the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, HMIC, HMI Prisons, HMI Probation, Ofsted and SSIW as appropriate. The joint inspection team is located within and led by HMI Probation.

Home Office objectives

The joint inspection contributes primarily to the achievement of Home Office Objective II – 'more offenders are caught, punished and stop offending and victims are better supported', and to the requirement to ensure that custodial and community sentences are more effective at stopping offending.

It also contributes to the achievement of Objective III, through the scrutiny of work to address drug and other substance misuse, and to other relevant criminal justice system and Children's Services' objectives in England and Extending Entitlement objectives in Wales.

The **purpose** of the joint inspection is to report to the Secretary of State and, through him Parliament and the public, on the effectiveness of the YOTs in fulfilling their statutory duties to prevent offending by children and young people, and thereby protect the public, whilst still safeguarding their rights and promoting their welfare.

The **aims** of the programme are to:

- ◆ assess the impact made by YOTs and partner organisations on the prevention of offending by children and young people through effective supervision
- ◆ appraise the work undertaken by YOTs and partner organisations to meet the needs of children and young people at risk of offending and enable them to lead law-abiding and constructive lives
- ◆ evaluate the role of the YOTs in safeguarding the rights and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- ◆ assess the extent to which the YOTs are meeting the required standards and targets set by the YJB
- ◆ promote good practice in the management arrangements of YOTs and service delivery to the courts and community
- ◆ identify underperformance and make recommendations to promote improvements
- ◆ evaluate the effective use of resources
- ◆ actively promote race equality and diversity as an integral part of the inspection process
- ◆ produce timely reports which contribute to improved performance by informing policy and practice.

Inspection arrangements

- ◇ The joint YOT inspection is conducted in line with the Government's commitment to proportionate and coordinated inspection in local government. It:
 - is proportionate to risk, with fieldwork adapted to the circumstances of the YOT and only carried out to identify findings or to disseminate good practice
 - complements, and is coordinated with, other inspection programmes, including the JARs in England, and inspections undertaken as part of the WPI and of Youth Support Services in Wales
 - informs judgements made in the APA and CPA in England.
- ◇ The criteria for the third phase of the inspection focus on:
 - management and partnership arrangements
 - work in the courts
 - work with children and young people in the community
 - work with children and young people subject to DTOs
 - victims and restorative justice.
- ◇ Prior to the inspection, each YOT is asked to submit selected advance information and complete a self-assessment, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- ◇ In England, fieldwork for each individual inspection takes place over one week, prior to the JAR. It consists of:
 - an assessment of a representative sample of individual case files
 - meetings with relevant managers, representatives of partner organisations and members of the YOT staff
 - contact with children and young people, their parents/carers and the victims of offences committed by children and young people supervised by the YOT.
- ◇ Fieldwork in Wales includes the same elements but is linked to inspections undertaken as part of the WPI and of Youth Support Services. The assessment of case files may, therefore, be conducted in advance of the meetings with managers and staff. However, the total amount of inspection time spent within the YOT remains the same as in England.
- ◇ The assessment of case files consists of a representative sample of between 30 and 80 children and young people (dependent on the YOT's workload) who have been subject to some form of intervention in the previous months. The cases cover most orders, including licences and are examined in detail. The case manager and any other person significantly involved in delivering the intervention are interviewed as part of the file reading exercise and, where possible, the child or young person themselves and their parents/carers.

- ◆ In order to encourage self-assessment and increase ownership of the inspection findings, we are inviting YOTs to second a member of their staff, usually an experienced practitioner, as a representative accompanying the inspection team, for the fieldwork week. We consider this to be a positive way of developing mutual understanding and strengthening the links between inspection and practice.
- ◆ The inspection findings will be compiled in a report which includes recommendations for improvement. These recommendations will be designed to encourage the YOT in its work, to support good practice and to promote improvements.
- ◆ The report is submitted to the Home Secretary, as the Secretary of State responsible for youth justice, with simultaneous copies to the Education and Health Secretaries. In Wales, reports are also submitted to the Ministers for Social Care and Regeneration, Lifelong Learning, Health and Social Care as well as the Minister for Children.
- ◆ Reports on YOTs in Wales are published in both Welsh and English. We also aim to fulfil our other responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act 1993 in accordance with the central principle of equality embodied in the Act.
- ◆ A copy is sent to the YJB. Copies are also made available to the press and placed on the website of HMI Probation at:
<http://www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

Code of practice

Each inspection will:

- ◆ be undertaken with integrity in a professional, impartial and courteous manner
- ◆ enable the development of independent judgements, based on evidence
- ◆ seek to energise and engage with staff
- ◆ promote race equality and diversity throughout its processes
- ◆ be concluded with the timely publication of a report containing findings and recommendations for improvement.

Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within the remit of this inspection programme should write to:

*HM Chief Inspector of Probation
2nd Floor, Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London SW1P 2BQ*

Scoring approach

The scoring approach has been significantly changed in phase three of the inspection programme to ensure compatibility with that of the JAR and Corporate Assessment in England, and the similar judgements used in inspections undertaken as part of the WPI and of Youth Support Services in Wales.

In phase three, each of the five sections of the inspection are individually assessed against the relevant criteria. Assessments are based on:

- ◇ information supplied by the YOT
- ◇ interviews with chief officers, managers and staff both from the YOT and other partner organisations
- ◇ examination of case files
- ◇ discussions with case managers and other people significantly involved in the supervisory process
- ◇ the perspectives of the children and young people, their parents/carers and, where possible, their victims, contacted during the course of the inspection
- ◇ information supplied by the JAR, Corporate Assessment and other relevant inspection findings in England and inspections as part of the WPI and of Youth Support Services in Wales.

The judgements and their descriptors are given in the table below:

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

We summarise the judgements of the five sections in an overall assessment. We have decided that in phase three we will not give a general categorisation of the performance as a whole, as we wish each YOT to focus attention on its own specific areas for improvement.

Next steps

- ◇ The YOT will be asked to send a response to the recommendations, to the lead inspector, together with an action plan within three months of the publication of the report. It is anticipated that the recommendations will normally be addressed within 12 months of publication to allow sufficient time for integration within existing developments.
- ◇ Once the action plan has been agreed by the lead inspector, it will be passed to the YJB who will monitor the recommendations' implementation.
- ◇ The joint inspection programme does not normally include any follow-up action unless issues were to emerge during the course of the programme that were of such serious concern to require immediate attention. The inspection of the Dudley YOS has not revealed any such concerns.
- ◇ In addition to the reports on individual YOTs, the joint inspection team also publishes periodic reports on findings across a number of teams. Such reports include comments on race equality and diversity issues and other trend information. They also include comparisons between the performance of YOTs with similar characteristics.

Inspection criteria for YOTs in England

1. Management

1.1: Leadership

Key judgement

1.1.1: The Management Board provides strategic oversight and direction, and coordinates the provision of youth justice services by the YOT and partner organisations.

Evidence

- 1.1.1.1 There is a clear line of accountability for the YOT to the local authority Chief Executive and YOT plans are integrated with those of the wider council.
 - 1.1.1.2 The Management Board is made up of representatives of partner organisations who attend and participate actively in meetings.
 - 1.1.1.3 Members of the Management Board represent the needs of the YOT to their parent organisations.
 - 1.1.1.4 The Management Board gives support and guidance to the YOT Manager to ensure that they engage with local and national priorities and promote race equality and wider diversity issues.
 - 1.1.1.5 The Management Board ensures that the Youth Justice Plan is implemented.
 - 1.1.1.6 The Management Board ensures the provision of accurate and timely data returns, both for its own use and that of the YJB.
 - 1.1.1.7 Partners regularly and collectively review, monitor and evaluate service information to ensure that the YOT is contributing to improving outcomes for children and young people.
-

1.2 Partnership and resources

Key judgement

1.2.1: Partner organisations and the YOT work together to deter children and young people from offending.

Evidence

- 1.2.1.1 The Youth Justice Plan reflects partner strategies.
 - 1.2.1.2 Resources have been identified and capacity exists to meet assessed need.
 - 1.2.1.3 YOTs are appropriately staffed by partners according to legislation and Home Office/YJB guidance.
 - 1.2.1.4 Protocols, contracts and SLAs have been agreed between the YOT, its statutory partners and other relevant organisations to address the coordination of work, delivery of services, information sharing, human resources and funding arrangements. They are regularly reviewed and updated.
 - 1.2.1.5 The YOT is a member of the ACPC/Local Children's Safeguarding Board, and operates according to local child protection procedures.
 - 1.2.1.6 The YOT contributes to a joint-agency approach to the management of high-risk offenders in the community, including MAPPA and registration with the police.
 - 1.2.1.7 There are secure arrangements for the recording and sharing of information on children and young people at risk, including those moving across service boundaries.
 - 1.2.1.8 A range of interventions and services, including health and education, are provided across the authority to meet the needs of children and young people who have offended and those at risk of offending.
 - 1.2.1.9 The YOT contributes to community regeneration initiatives that are targeted at the most needy areas and address the broad range of family needs in an integrated way.
 - 1.2.1.10 The YOT contributes to successful outcomes in reducing anti-social behaviour, in particular through effective partnership working.
-

1.3 Staff supervision, development and training

Key judgement

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

Evidence

- 1.3.1.1 Practice is defined by written policies and procedures.
 - 1.3.1.2 Staff are regularly supervised within a performance management framework, in accordance with their developmental needs and assessed level of competence.
 - 1.3.1.3 Annual appraisals contain objectives that are linked to local and national targets.
 - 1.3.1.4 All staff are appropriately qualified and provided with training opportunities to equip them to meet the requirements of the Youth Justice Plan to identify and manage risks and to raise safeguarding concerns.
 - 1.3.1.5 Training needs are regularly reviewed.
 - 1.3.1.6 Volunteers are appropriately trained and are available for YOT activities.
 - 1.3.1.7 CRB checks are undertaken on all staff and volunteers who have access to children and young people or their case files, and are updated at least every three years.
 - 1.3.1.8 Joint agreements are in place for the management of disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures.
 - 1.3.1.9 There is a written complaints procedure, which is well publicised and easily accessible. Complaints are properly managed against the procedure.
 - 1.3.1.10 Health and safety assessments of facilities and activities are undertaken, acted on and updated regularly.
-

2. Work in the courts

Key judgement

2.1: Good working relationships exist between the YOT and the local court.

Evidence

- 2.1.1 An agreement is in place between the YOT, justices' clerk or his/her nominated senior lawyer and the local Crown Court covering arrangements for court services.
 - 2.1.2 The YOT provides trained and knowledgeable staff to ensure adequate representation in any courts within its geographical area, including Saturday/bank holiday cover and the Crown Courts.
 - 2.1.3 The YOT attends and contributes to a Youth Court User Group, which meets regularly and whose purpose is detailed in the national standard.
 - 2.1.4 The YOT provides regular inputs to magistrates' court and Crown Court staff about a range of programmes and sentencing options.
-

Key judgement

2.2: Effective practice with children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT within the courts.

Evidence

- 2.2.1 Information and first appointments are provided to all children and young people who are made the subject of community sentences or bail supervision and support programmes.
 - 2.2.2 All children and young people remanded or sentenced to secure or custodial detention are interviewed, assessed for vulnerability, and the information is passed to the establishment within the national standard timescale.
-

Key judgement

2.3: Children and young people are safeguarded and the likelihood of their further offending reduced by the provision of appropriate services, including bail supervision and support programmes.

Evidence

- 2.3.1 Arrangements are in place between the YOT and the appropriate local Children Service's Department regarding the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984), remands from Saturday/bank holiday courts and the completion of the appropriate paperwork for children and young people remanded to the care of the local authority.
 - 2.3.2 There are arrangements in place, to which the YOT has agreed, to identify and alert the YOT of all children and young people who are at risk of secure or custodial remand.
 - 2.3.3 Differentiated support/supervision services are offered, commensurate with likelihood of remand, to address objections to bail.
 - 2.3.4 Follow-up services are provided to securely remanded children and young people to ensure that, where appropriate, further bail applications are made and accompanied by commensurate support packages.
-

Key judgement

2.4: Courts are assisted in making informed decisions by the provision of good quality reports from the YOT.

Evidence

- 2.4.1 PSRs are produced in accordance with the relevant national standards, of a good quality, to time and in the agreed format.
 - 2.4.2 PSRs are impartial, free from discriminatory language and stereotypes.
 - 2.4.3 Proposals are appropriate and commensurate.
 - 2.4.4 A copy of the PSR is provided to the child or young person and their parents/carers, where appropriate, and in good time.
 - 2.4.5 SSRs and stand-down reports are available and assist the court in timely decision-making.
-

3. Work with children and young people in the community

3.1: Work with children and young people at risk of offending

Key judgement

3.1.1: Children and young people are prevented from offending.

Evidence

- 3.1.1.1 The YOT contributes to the provision of services in the local authority to divert children and young people from offending.
 - 3.1.1.2 A process has been agreed by the YOT and its partners to identify and assess children and young people at risk of offending.
 - 3.1.1.3 Assessments are sensitive to cultural difference and diversity, and linked to criminogenic needs.
 - 3.1.1.4 Interventions are inclusive and address the specific needs of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
 - 3.1.1.5 Attention is given to safeguarding children and young people.
 - 3.1.1.6 Interventions demonstrate effectiveness in reducing offending and promoting positive outcomes.
 - 3.1.1.7 There is a reduction in the number of children and young people who are first-time entrants into the criminal justice system.
-

3.2: Work with children and young people who have offended

Key judgement

3.2.1: Children and young people who have offended are prevented from reoffending.

Evidence

- 3.2.1.1 An Asset form is fully completed at the beginning of all interventions and reviewed as appropriate. It is informed by contact with social services and the self-assessment, and takes account of cultural difference, diversity and safeguarding issues.
- 3.2.1.2 Risk of harm to others is fully assessed in all cases identified as posing a potential risk, through the initial Asset form or alternative accepted tool.
- 3.2.1.3 Supervision plans are written in accordance with national standards, with a victim restorative process, emanate from Asset and contain SMART objectives.
- 3.2.1.4 Interventions address offending behaviour, are targeted in areas of assessed need and are evaluated and consistent with the principles of effective practice.
- 3.2.1.5 Interventions are inclusive and address the specific needs of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
- 3.2.1.6 Contact with children and young people is consistent with national standards and Home Office/YJB guidance.
- 3.2.1.7 Enforcement activity follows non-compliance within the national standard timescale.
- 3.2.1.8 Action is taken to challenge and reduce discrimination and harassment by children and young people.
- 3.2.1.9 Examination of the case file provides evidence of progress.
- 3.2.1.10 The YOT demonstrates a reduction in offending in the pre-court, first tier and community bands of penalties.
- 3.2.1.11 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, show improvements in behaviour, attitude and family relationships.

Key judgement

3.2.2: The health of children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT.

Evidence

- 3.2.2.1 Staff working with children and young people are advised and supported in identifying possible physical and mental health problems and in making appropriate referrals.
 - 3.2.2.2 Specialist assessments are undertaken on those with health needs.
 - 3.2.2.3 Children and young people who have offended are discouraged from substance misuse.
 - 3.2.2.4 Children and young people with health problems are supported in accessing services that address their assessed needs.
 - 3.2.2.5 Examination of the case file shows evidence of improved health outcomes.
 - 3.2.2.6 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, suggest an improvement in physical and mental health.
-

Key judgement

3.2.3: Children and young people who have offended are safeguarded through the work of the YOT.

Evidence

- 3.2.3.1 Risk of harm, either to self or to/from others (vulnerability), is fully assessed in all cases.
 - 3.2.3.2 The YOT refers cases where safeguarding concerns have been identified, to the local Children's Services and contributes to child protection plans on a case-by-case basis.
 - 3.2.3.3 Threshold criteria for making and responding to safeguarding referrals are clear and widely understood by staff from both the YOT and Children's Services.
 - 3.2.3.4 Interventions take account of safeguarding children and young people.
 - 3.2.3.5 There is evidence of joint working and the sharing of information and plans with the allocated social worker, particularly in the cases of Looked After Children.
 - 3.2.3.6 Looked After Children who have offended receive specific guidance and support.
 - 3.2.3.7 The YOT contributes to the reviews of Looked After Children who have offended.
 - 3.2.3.8 Examination of the case file reveals a reduction of risk factors.
 - 3.2.3.9 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, show a reduction in vulnerability.
-

Key judgement

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

Evidence

- 3.2.4.1 Specialist assessments are undertaken on those with specific educational needs.
 - 3.2.4.2 Interventions promote attainment and are targeted in areas of assessed educational need.
 - 3.2.4.3 Support is given to children and young people who have offended and their parents/carers, to promote good behaviour, attendance at school and educational attainment.
 - 3.2.4.4 Action is taken to ensure that children and young people who have been permanently excluded from school attend alternative settings aimed at securing reintegration into mainstream education.
 - 3.2.4.5 Children and young people who have offended are supported in securing further education, training or employment.
 - 3.2.4.6 Examination of the case file provides evidence of improved achievement and/or attainment.
 - 3.2.4.7 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, show improved achievement and/or attainment.
-

Key judgement

3.2.5: Outcomes for children and young people are improved by their involvement through consultation about the services provided by the YOT.

Evidence

- 3.2.5.1 The YOT involves children and young people in consultations about the services they receive.
 - 3.2.5.2 Proactive measures are taken to ensure that children and young people in minority groups, younger children and those with communication problems are able to give their views.
 - 3.2.5.3 Consultation with children and young people makes a significant difference to the quality of service provision.
 - 3.2.5.4 Staff give effective feedback on action following consultation, or on issues raised by individual children and young people, including reasons for not acting on particular issues.
-

3.3: Work with parents/carers

Key judgement

3.3.1: Parents/carers are supported in addressing their children's offending.

Evidence

- 3.3.1.1 Assessments of parenting skills are carried out in a timely manner, in accordance with YJB effective practice guidelines and are used to inform interventions.
 - 3.3.1.2 Parents/carers are made aware of the requirements of the interventions and are kept informed about progress during the course of the intervention.
 - 3.3.1.3 Parents/carers are referred to interventions that are sensitive to the diverse needs of parents/carers from a range of cultural backgrounds and are available on a voluntary and statutory basis.
 - 3.3.1.4 Parents/carers are supported in addressing their children's behaviour.
 - 3.3.1.5 Interventions promote effective parenting in relation to the parents'/carers' ability to care, control and safeguard the child or young person.
-

4. Work with children and young people subject to DTOs

Key judgement

4.1: The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by assessment.

Evidence

- 4.1.1 An initial Asset form is completed that takes account of cultural difference, diversity, health, education, safeguarding and family issues, and forwarded immediately to the secure establishment.
 - 4.1.2 Specific risk factors (e.g. risk of harm, either to self or to/from others, health or substance misuse) are assessed and communicated to the secure establishment immediately.
 - 4.1.3 The YOT worker forwards copies of all relevant assessments, including care plans, PSRs, previous convictions, health and educational plans, to the secure establishment within 24 hours of the court appearance.
 - 4.1.4 The YOT worker contributes to the initial training plan and ensures that it is informed by Asset.
 - 4.1.5 The YOT works proactively with the secure establishment to ensure that the child's or young person's educational, training and health needs are assessed and addressed.
 - 4.1.6 Action is taken to identify and address the specific needs of Looked After, or otherwise vulnerable children and young people, girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
 - 4.1.7 The child's or young person's housing needs on release are assessed and action taken, where relevant, to prevent the loss of existing accommodation or to secure new settled arrangements.
-

Key judgement

- 4.2: The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by contact with the child or young person and effective liaison with the secure establishment during the custodial period.

Evidence

- 4.2.1 The YOT communicates regularly with key people in secure establishments.
- 4.2.2 The YOT worker contributes effectively to sentence planning and review meetings and to reviews of the training plan.
- 4.2.3 The YOT facilitates contact with all service providers who are relevant to the needs of the child or young person and the risk they present.
- 4.2.4 Arrangements to meet the child's or young person's assessed needs, particularly in relation to health, education and accommodation, are established in preparation for their release.
- 4.2.5 Provision is made to address the specific needs of Looked After or otherwise vulnerable children, girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those who are disabled.
- 4.2.6 The YOT worker contributes actively to the final review meeting, in accordance with the national standard.
- 4.2.7 Parents/carers are encouraged to attend sentence planning and review meetings, in particular, the final review meeting.

Key judgement

- 4.3: The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by reintegration into the community.

Evidence

- 4.3.1 The training plan is reviewed within ten working days and subsequently on a three-month basis or at the end of the order, whichever is soonest.
- 4.3.2 The YOT worker assesses and monitors the child's or young person's housing needs.
- 4.3.3 The YOT worker monitors the provision of health and education services, and the Management Board is informed where these services are not provided, in accordance with the national standard.
- 4.3.4 The child's or young person's individual learning plan continues following release and is regularly reviewed, updated and shared with relevant providers and organisations, particularly Connexions.
- 4.3.5 Interventions commenced in custody to address offending behaviour, health, safeguarding and education are continued on release, where appropriate.
- 4.3.6 Interventions are inclusive and address the specific needs of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
- 4.3.7 YOT contact with children and young people released from custody is consistent with the national standard and Home Office/YJB guidance.
- 4.3.8 Enforcement activity follows non-compliance within the national standard timescale.

Key judgement

- 4.4: The YOT demonstrates positive outcomes in its work with children and young people subject to DTOs.

Evidence

- 4.4.1 Examination of the case file provides evidence of progress, demonstrated, for example, by attitude to offending, improved family relationships, health outcomes, educational attainment and reduced vulnerability.
- 4.4.2 The YOT demonstrates a reduction in reoffending for the custody band of penalties.
- 4.4.3 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, show improvements in behaviour and attitude.
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5. Victims and restorative justice

Key judgement

5.1: Victims of children and young people who have offended feel that they have been assisted by the intervention of the YOT in achieving closure.

Evidence

- 5.1.1 Assessments of victims' needs are consistently carried out in a timely manner, in accordance with effective practice guidelines.
 - 5.1.2 All victims are given the opportunity to make informed decisions about their involvement in direct/indirect restorative processes with children and young people who have offended and are supported in doing so.
 - 5.1.3 Communications are undertaken in a sensitive manner, responsive to individual needs, circumstances, preference and diversity.
 - 5.1.4 Victims are offered the opportunity to influence any reparative element of the child's or young person's supervision plan and to be informed of their progress.
 - 5.1.5 Victims have access to a restorative intervention tailored to their needs.
 - 5.1.6 Restorative and reparative interventions are provided that are appropriate to the age, vulnerability, culture, ethnicity, language needs, literacy levels and gender of the victims and children and young people who have offended.
 - 5.1.7 All victims are offered the opportunity to give feedback that is used to inform the work of the YOT.
 - 5.1.8 Children and young people involved in restorative interventions make a positive contribution to the victim and community.
-