



**YOUTH
OFFENDING
TEAM**
Inspection

Press Notice

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Independent inspection of probation and youth offending work

EMBARGOED UNTIL 31/10/07 PUBLICATION OF INSPECTION REPORT EAST SUSSEX YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM

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

Andrew Bridges, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, said:

“The Chief Officer’s Group provided strategic direction, support and critical friendship to the YOT. Operationally, management arrangements and quality assurance processes required developing to ensure consistency in effective practice. A comprehensive range of staff skills and interventions with children and young people were in place and the YOT were viewed very highly by other agencies and partners.

East Sussex YOT took pride in the service it delivered and both managers and staff showed a positive approach to addressing the recommendations from the inspection; in fact improvement arrangements were implemented shortly after the field work. We believe the YOT is in a strong position to improve performance and deliver a sustained level of service over the forthcoming years”.

The report’s main findings are:

Management

There was strong leadership and governance being provided by the Chief Officer’s Group to the YOT. The contribution, in terms of staff, resources, and overall commitment to the YOT from the Primary Care Trust was seen very much a strength during the inspection. There needed to be an increased focus on the assessment and management of Risk of Harm and Safeguarding.

Work in the courts

Relationships at all levels with the courts were very positive and the courts were extremely satisfied and complimentary with the level of service they received from the YOT. However, although the proportion of remand episodes resulting in custody had reduced in the previous year they had now risen again and were in need of being addressed by the YOT.

Work with children and young people in the community

Good partnership arrangements were in existence to engage children and young people on the cusp of offending, however, at the time of the inspection there was no prevention strategy in place to coordinate this work. A wide range of interventions were available to address the offending behaviour and criminogenic needs of children and young people who had offended and overall the resulting outcomes

were good, however, Risk of Harm and Safeguarding issues were not being accurately assessed or managed.

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

There were good contact levels with children and young people during the custodial part of their sentence and efforts were made to encourage attendance of parents/carers and the various meetings. Almost all training plans outlined who would deliver the interventions and full attention had been paid to the methods most likely to be effective with the child or young person. However, the quality of interventions delivered during the community phase of supervision was deemed insufficient in a third of the relevant cases inspected.

Victims and restorative justice

Whilst the restorative justice coordinator worker coordinated all victim work there was a lack of knowledge and understanding amongst case managers of the work being undertaken resulting in only a few good examples of victim awareness work with children and young people who had offended. Victim needs were not consistently met, however, those who expressed a view, were overall satisfied with the level of service provided to them by the YOT.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The inspection of East Sussex YOT took place May and June 2007
2. East Sussex had a total population of 492,324 measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 9.9% were aged 10-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was slightly lower than the average for England, which was 10.4%.
3. Nine Inspectorates conduct the Youth Offending Team Inspections. They are Commission for Social Care Inspection, Estyn (HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation, Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.
4. The YOT inspection programme started in June 2003. All 157 YOTs within England and Wales are being inspected over a five to six year cycle.
5. Comprehensive inspection criteria have been developed to cover the third phase of the inspection programme, focusing on:
 - management
 - work in the courts
 - work with children and young people in the community
 - work with children and young people subject to Detention and Training Orders
 - victims and restorative justice.