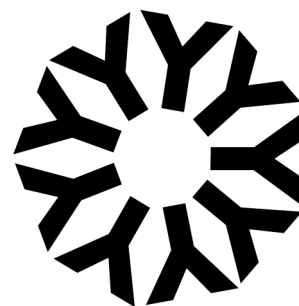


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Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on: Flintshire Youth Offending Team

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Foreword

During this third phase inspection of youth offending teams in England and Wales we found a team that had a number of strengths. Strong and purposeful leadership was provided by the Youth Offending Team Manager, supported by the operational managers and a committed and enthusiastic staff. Operationally the Youth Offending Team was strong, but strategically there were significant weaknesses in the functioning of the Management Board. This was partly due to its status and relationship with the Corporate Centre and also its location and status within the Education, Children's Services and Recreation Department. Whilst members of the Management Board were involved in both the Community Safety Partnership and the Young People's Partnership, their links to the Youth Offending Team were informal and as a result opportunities for tackling common strategic issues were missed. We were informed that this had already been identified as an issue and was being addressed by the Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council as part of a restructuring exercise.

We found some excellent work in the courts and very good work with children and young people in the community, those subject to DTOs and also work with victims and restorative justice. Positive use was being made of restorative justice conferences that included final warnings, and the joint training of panel members and magistrates was a significant and important development. The parents/carers, children and young people, and victims that we interviewed were generally very complimentary of the work of the Youth Offending Team.

Some areas required improvement. Assessments were generally conducted well, but greater attention needed to be given to individual plans and to children and young people at risk of harm, either to themselves or from others. The final warning scheme operated within the Home Office/Youth Justice Board guidance, but required review to improve its effectiveness. More should also be done for children and young people with mental health, education and training, and accommodation needs.

Our overall assessment of the performance of the Flintshire Youth Offending Team was that it had a good basis for development. The report contains a number of recommendations that we believe will assist the team to move forward and we are confident that it will make significant progress.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

September 2006

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

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Glossary

ACPC	Area Child Protection Committee
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
APA	Annual Performance Assessment
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
DANOS	Drugs and Alcohol National Occupational Standards
DTO	Detention and Training Order
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
JAR	Joint Area Review
LEA	Local Education Authority
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
Onset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
PSR	Pre-Sentence Report
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SQIFA	Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
SSR	Specific Sentence Report
WPI	Wales Programme for Improvement
YJB	Youth Justice Board
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, 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 Unitary Authority of Flintshire is located in North Wales, and shares a border with Cheshire in England.
- ◆ Flintshire had a total population of 148,594, measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 23.2% were aged 0-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was higher than the average for Wales of 22.8%.
- ◆ Flintshire had a predominantly white population, 99.2% and this was higher than the average for Wales of 97.9%. The percentage of Asian or Asian British residents was lower than the national average of 0.9%, being 0.2%. The percentage of Black or Black British residents, at 0.1%, was also lower than the national average of 0.3%.
- ◆ The level of employment in Flintshire was 62.6% and this was much higher than the average for Wales, which was 55.2% at the time of the census. The level of unemployment was 3.0%, and this was correspondingly lower than the average for Wales of 3.5%. There was a lower percentage of students, both economically active and inactive, living in Flintshire than nationally at the time of the census: 5.2% compared with 7.4% across Wales.
- ◆ The Census 2001 recorded that 11.0% of the population of Flintshire, who were aged three and over, could either speak, read or write Welsh. This was much lower than the average for Wales of 16.3%.
- ◆ The YJB figures for youth offending for the period April 2004 to March 2005 show that 29.4 offences were committed per 1000 children and young people aged 0-17 years in Flintshire.
- ◆ The YJB summary of YOT performance against the key performance indicators for April 2005 –March 2006 awarded Flintshire YOT a performance level of 3.

Scoring summary

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

	Section score
Management	3
Work in the courts	4
Work with children and young people in the community	3
Work with children and young people subject to DTOs	3
Victims and restorative justice	3
Overall assessment	

The Flintshire YOT had a good balance of experienced, committed and trained staff and had made significant progress since its establishment in 2002, following a split from the North East Wales YOT.

The YOT had a very strong operational management team that was well led by the YOT Manager. This strong leadership resulted in some excellent work in the courts and mostly very good practice in other key areas. Staff were positive about the YOT, clear about their roles, received planned and informal supervision and were encouraged to learn. We found a strong team making good use of the available resources internally and working effectively with children and young people, victims, parent/carers and other agencies.

We also found some areas of work that could be improved and were impressed to learn that suitable action had commenced following our initial feedback during the inspection. The YOT needed to improve its assessment processes, particularly in relation to those presenting a risk of harm. It also needed to address some issues regarding vulnerability and safeguarding, and in particular the placement of children and young people in unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation. There were also concerns regarding education and training and the provision of mental health services.

However, the main area of weakness appeared to concern strategic management. This had already been identified by the Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council and the Management Board as an area of weakness and was confirmed by this inspection. The Local Authority appeared to be well placed to take forward the agendas of the Community Safety Partnership and the Young People's Partnership, but the links with the YOT Management Board needed to be more formal and strategic. In this context, the chairing and membership of the Management Board required review and links with both the Community Safety Partnership and the Young People's Partnership needed

clarification with regard to status, accountability, and access to resources for the development of services. The Management Board also needed to develop its performance management role and develop its ability to tackle major strategic issues involving all partners and in particular housing, education, police and probation.

Overall we felt optimistic about the future of the Flintshire YOT and were confident that it had a good basis for further development.

Diversity issues

The Census 2001 showed that Flintshire had a predominantly white population. The percentage of Asian or Asian British and Black or Black British residents was lower than the national average for Wales. The census also recorded that 11.0% of the population in Flintshire, who were aged three and over, could either speak, read or write Welsh, a figure which was lower than the average for Wales of 16.3%. The inspection case file analysis showed that the children and young people engaged with the YOT were predominantly white and Welsh/British.

The Management Board and staff group appeared to be diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity and ability to work through the mediums of Welsh and English. There were no representatives from the Asian or Black communities, but on the whole the group was representative of the local population.

In reviewing staff training over the previous 12 months we found that diversity had had a high priority. Staff were introduced to the Local Authority's expectations during their induction and also through supervision and training. All staff, including managers, had recently participated in an e-learning project organised by the Local Authority's Diversity Officer, which was evaluated independently by an outside agency. In addition, meetings were taking place with other YOTs in North Wales regarding the development of suitable diversity training.

The YOT had no specific guidance for working with girls or young women, or children and young people with disabilities. However, we were aware that consideration was being given to working with girls and young women. Also the case file analysis indicated that diversity issues were taken into consideration in most cases, as staff focused on meeting individual need.

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	77%	84%	70-97%	100%
– adequate quality	80%	71%	29-93%	
Full risk of harm to others completed on relevant cases	58%	54%	17-83%	
Evidence of management oversight in risk of harm cases	57%	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	83%	75%	52-100%	
Judgements about acceptability/unacceptability of absences are appropriate	90%	71%	40-96%	
Breach/recall action has taken place, if required, within the national standards timescale	100%	49%	13-100%	
Evidence of any criminal activity during the course of the order	29%	29%	15-48%	
Appropriate action has been taken if a child or young person is considered vulnerable to harm from self and others	86%	95%	67-100%	
Effective action is taken where there is evidence of educational difficulties	75%	60%	33-81%	90%(3)
Appropriate referrals are made in cases of:				
– physical health	100%	n/a	n/a	
– mental/emotional health	100%	n/a	n/a	100%(4)
– substance misuse	88%	n/a	n/a	100%(5)
Victim was consulted about restorative/reparative justice work with child or young person	75%	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** – We found a well-managed YOT with a strong and effective YOT Manager, ably supported by committed and innovative operation managers and staff, with good potential for further development. Staff supervision was generally satisfactory. However, the Management Board needed to give greater attention to the development of a more strategic focus. Links with partner agencies, through protocols and SLAs, required review and updating. There were also issues regarding the level of representation and attendance at the Management Board. As a consequence, although we felt that the Board had considerable potential to develop through its established operational networks, we also believed that further attention needed to be given to the commitment of partners to the YOT.

- ◆ **Work in the courts** – Relationships between the YOT and the courts were good, and structures were in place to review working arrangements on an ongoing basis through the various court user groups. The quality of PSRs examined was excellent as a result of a very effective gate-keeping process, which was rigorously applied, with very high standards being achieved in the offence analysis and impact on the victim sections.

The court team had a clear remit that was understood by everyone involved in the court process. It worked effectively with magistrates, providing relevant information before sentencing, and also with children and young people and their parents/carers, supporting them during adjournments and following sentence. We were concerned that, due to the lack of accommodation available, a small number of children and young people were sometimes bailed to unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation. However, the YOT Manager was seeking to address this through the Management Board and various accommodation and housing forums.

- ◆ **Work with children and young people in the community** – The YOT, in partnership with a range of agencies, had arrangements in place to divert children and young people from offending and a number of activities were available for this purpose. Although we found some very good work with regard to assessment, supervision planning and individual work with children and young people on offending behaviour, the assessment and management of risk of harm needed work, as did the oversight of such cases. Safeguarding issues required attention and the YOT needed to develop its approach to final warnings.

Education also required attention as the percentage of school age pupils who did not get their full education entitlement was 29%, and the percentage of young people aged 16 or over who were not in ETE

was 49%. Both categories were too high. More should also be done for children and young people with mental health needs.

Feedback from children and young people, parents/carers and victims was collected, but was not always used consistently to inform practice. Work with parents/carers formed a significant part of the work of individual members of staff, within a clear policy and practice framework and led by the YOT Parenting Coordinator.

- ◆ **Work with children and young people subject to DTOs** – The YOT worked effectively with children and young people before, during and following their sentence. Appropriate arrangements were in place to inform the custodial establishment immediately of the background and risks relating to the child or young person. Contact levels with children and young people during the custodial part of their sentence were good and the YOT supported parents/carers during this period.

Generally the work started in custody continued in the community following discharge, but the training plans did not meet the national standards with regard to SMART objectives in 80% of the cases examined. This meant that the plans were not sufficiently clear to ensure that training for children and young people in custody was carried forward into the community element of their order.

- ◆ **Victims and restorative justice** – We found that victim work was well established within the YOT. A high percentage of victims were contacted and assessed with their consent. Victims were also invited to attend the referral order panel, but required more feedback on the outcome of restorative justice initiatives.

Restorative justice arrangements were in place and the referral panel met regularly to establish and review contracts. The panel accessed a range of activities in the community, including the development of personal skills, participation in sport and reparation through environmental and community projects.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council should ensure that:

- ◆ the Management Board is properly constituted, supported effectively by partner agencies and new members are properly inducted and prepared for their role
- ◆ the YOT has a clear strategic role within the Community Safety Partnership and the Young People's Partnership, and is able to increase its capacity with their support.

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
- ◆ the YOT and partner agencies promote efficient service delivery by reviewing and developing protocols, policies and SLAs, with regard to staffing and providing resources for the YOT
- ◆ the Management Board develops its performance management framework to monitor and review the implementation of the youth justice plan and inform the strategic direction of the YOT
- ◆ the YOT Manager receives formal and planned supervision.

The YOT Manager should ensure that:

- ◆ the YOT's risk policy is fully implemented and risk of harm assessments are completed on all relevant cases, and regularly reviewed and endorsed by managers as appropriate
- ◆ record-keeping through the Care Works electronic system and other filing systems is coordinated as efficiently as possible in order to provide a full picture of each individual case, including ISSP, as quickly as possible
- ◆ in partnership with the LEA and training organisations, the quality of education and training plans for children and young people subject to DTOs is improved
- ◆ interventions are formally evaluated to assess their effectiveness and used to develop practice and policy.

Partner organisations should ensure that:

- ◆ representation on the Management Board is at a sufficient level of seniority for effective decision making
- ◆ their strategic plans link effectively, in operational terms, to the Youth Justice Plan 2006/2007.

Community and Housing should ensure that:

- ◆ a practice protocol is developed that promotes clear and close working relationships with the YOT in order that children and young people are safeguarded
- ◆ a range of suitable accommodation is available as an alternative to bed and breakfast accommodation.

North Wales Police should ensure that:

- ◆ final warnings and restorative conferencing are developed in accordance with Home Office/YJB guidance (2002)
- ◆ greater consistency and effectiveness are achieved through one basic protocol or SLA covering funding and staff secondments for the four YOTs situated within North Wales.

The Local Health Board should ensure that:

- ◆ children and young people with mental health needs receive the appropriate level of attention and intervention, and that provision is underpinned by written and agreed protocols.

The Local Education Authority should ensure that:

- ◆ a sufficient range and number of places are available to meet the individual needs of vulnerable children and young people, to ensure that they receive their statutory entitlement to education.

Careers Wales should ensure that:

- ◆ it fulfils its existing SLA with the YOT and improves its attendance at pre-release meetings for young people aged 16 and over, and ensures that suitable training is available to them on discharge back into the community
- ◆ it effectively tracks young people aged 16 and over who offend, to engage them in training and employment opportunities.

Flintshire County Council, in partnership with other agencies, should ensure that:

- ◆ a sufficient range of suitable accommodation is available for children and young people on bail, or who are effectively homeless, and/or have special support needs.

1. MANAGEMENT

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.*

Flintshire YOT had been formed in April 2002, when it separated from the Wrexham YOT. Both YOTs had previously made up the North East Wales YOT. The split, which was not supported by the YJB initially but had since been recognised, meant that the Flintshire YOT started with limited resources in terms of management capacity, staffing and infrastructure. The present YOT Manager was appointed in April 2003 and significant development had taken place under his leadership.

All of the statutory partners were represented on the Management Board, but we had some concerns about the Board's ability to provide strategic oversight and direction. The membership was not always of sufficient status and attendance at meetings varied considerably. The Management Board and the Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council had recognised the need to review membership of the Board including the status of the Chair, and this had been reinforced by a Management Board development day held in November 2005. At the time of the inspection, the Chair was held by the Head of Children's Services who also line managed the YOT Manager. However, the YOT Manager also reported to the Chief Executive and the Director of Education, Children's Services and Recreation Department on relevant matters on an *ad hoc* basis. These management relationships required review and clarification with regard to status, role and accountability.

Strengths:

- ◆ The Management Board had recognised that changes were needed and as a result had held a Management Board development day in November 2005.
- ◆ All the statutory partners, together with other key agencies, were represented on the Management Board.
- ◆ Members of the Management Board were represented within the Community Safety Partnership, the Young People's Partnership and other relevant groups that had the potential to enhance the work of the YOT.

- ◆ The planned appointment of a performance management and information officer in the near future would improve the YOT's capacity to collect, analyse and use information to improve its effectiveness.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The chairing, membership, attendance, role and function of the Management Board required review. Members of the Board reported that they had not received any formal induction and as a consequence did not appear to have sufficient knowledge of their responsibilities or of the work of the YOT, to fulfil their role on the Board.
- ◆ Since Flintshire was a relatively small authority and most of the key players met regularly, the YOT Manager and his team were able to by-pass the Management Board by using their existing networks. Whilst this approach speeded up the decision-making process through direct contact at the right levels within organisations, in practice it reduced the role of the Management Board to that of a receiver of information rather than an effective decision-making and strategic body.
- ◆ The Management Board needed to be more proactive in its use of performance management information to inform the strategic direction of the YOT. This had already been recognised by the Board, and a Performance and Reporting Framework had recently been approved and was in the process of being implemented.

Good practice

The Management Board held a development day in November 2005, facilitated by an independent consultant and including a contribution from the YJB Manager for Wales. Prior to the day, the Management Board had undertaken its own self-assessment using the format contained in *Sustaining the Success* (YJB, October 2004). The development day examined achievements and areas for improvement, and concluded with recommendations for action.

1.2 Partnership and resources

Key judgement:

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

The YOT was located within the Education, Children's Services and Recreation Department and was connected to Children's Services, Community Safety Partnership and Young People's Partnership planning. It was also represented on the ACPC, as well as the MAPPA and a number of other relevant groups and initiatives. However, these appeared to exist in

relative isolation and did not have clear lines of communication with the YOT Management Board at a strategic level, to prevent offending or work with children and young people who had already offended.

The YOT appeared to have been resourced on an historical basis and through informal networks that did not always involve the Management Board. In this way the YOT had achieved significant permanent funding, but needed formal agreements from partner agencies. It had also been able to obtain Cymorth (National Assembly for Wales) and Community Safety funding on a fixed-term basis for the Parenting Coordinator and Community Punishment Officer posts.

Strengths:

- ◆ All statutory partners provided staffing or financial resources to the YOT and were committed to working in partnership, having formally signed a 'statement of intent'.
- ◆ The YOT had the potential to develop clearer and more effective links between the Management Board and the Community Safety Partnership and the Young People's Partnership at a strategic level.
- ◆ The YOT was part of the Education, Children's Services and Recreation Department and was well placed to link into the Local Authority's arrangements for developing its capacity across the range of children and young people services, as well as its role as corporate parent.
- ◆ The Community Safety Partnership and the Young People's Partnership planning had representation from the Management Board and YOT on various sub-groups and worked effectively at an operational level with a wide range of agencies in the statutory and independent sectors.
- ◆ There were some very good examples of partnership working at an operational level. The YOT was consequently able to provide a wide range of interventions and had access to specialist workers, through partner agencies. Partners included social services, police, probation, health, education and voluntary agencies. All partners contributed staff and resources as outlined in the Youth Justice Plan 2005/2006.
- ◆ There were good links between the YOT and other local organisations to improve access to diversionary and developmental educational activities. The YOT had its own range of activities on offer, which helped children and young people develop life skills and there were several examples of positive and effective partnerships at an operational level.
- ◆ The probation area employed a member of staff, funded by Community Safety Partnership money who worked with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and provided age-appropriate groups and projects for children and young people subject to community orders with unpaid work requirements.

- ◆ The YOT also ran a Breakthrough Course in partnership with Careers Wales North East. The programme helped children and young people to develop skills for working in teams, building self-confidence, improving their curriculum vitas and provided a link to Youth Gateway.
- ◆ The YOT made a significant contribution to the Flintshire Prevent and Deter Panel, a multi-disciplinary sub-group of the Community Safety Partnership. The panel aimed to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in criminal behaviour and achieved this by identifying and targeting those most at risk of offending with appropriate intervention programmes. The panel had a written protocol covering all aspects of its work.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The strategic links between the YOT Management Board and the Community Safety Partnership and Young People's Partnership required greater clarity with regard to status, accountability, access to new resources and development of services.
- ◆ We were concerned at the lack of clarity regarding the arrangements for communication between the Management Board and its partners. Minutes of the meetings did not provide any evidence of reports to and from these organisations.
- ◆ Although the LEA and the YOT worked closely together to track and support the children and young people under the supervision of the YOT, 29% of school-age pupils received less than ten hours tuition a week, and 49% of those aged 16 and over were not in ETE.
- ◆ The status and understanding of the YOT's role and function needed to be improved within the Local Authority at a corporate level, in particular with housing.
- ◆ The funding arrangements for the YOT had not been formally reviewed since it was established.
- ◆ The YOT had no up-to-date protocols in place or SLAs covering the contribution of partner agencies to the YOT.

Good practice

Children and young people subject to unpaid work were supervised by the YOT instead of being referred to the probation area, where they would have mixed with adult offenders. The programmes were age-appropriate and used a range of suitable facilities and resources based in the community.

1.3

Staff supervision, development and training

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◆ Arrangements were in place for all YOT staff to have formal monthly supervision with their line manager, based on the internal staff supervision policy and procedures and linked to meeting the requirements of the youth justice plan. These sessions were properly documented, dated and signed by both parties and followed an agreed formula covering; individual and personal issues, team issues, health and safety, case discussion, and training and development. Although greater consistency was required, it was clear that staff supervision was seen as a priority and considered important to the effectiveness of the YOT. All staff interviewed expressed satisfaction with the formal supervision that they had received and also the informal support received from colleagues in the YOT.
- ◆ The YOT was in the process of considering the implications of a new supervision policy and procedure for staff working in Children's Services. Furthermore, since April 2005, it had started to introduce an annual appraisal for all staff working in the YOT, based on the corporate employee appraisal policy and procedure produced by Flintshire County Council Human Resources. Prior to April 2005 it had introduced its own staff appraisal policy.
- ◆ Additional supervision arrangements were in place with some partner agencies, but had not always been effective for probation and the substance misuse worker seconded from the Cyngor Alcohol Information Service. However, these problems had been identified and were being tackled by the probation area, Cyngor Alcohol Information Service and the YOT Manager. The YOT police constable was provided with external supervision and appraisal from the Community Safety Sergeant and internally by the Operations Manager responsible for prevention services.
- ◆ The YOT made effective use of its weekly team meetings to share good practice amongst team members. Team meetings were used positively to introduce new legislation, changes to national standards and operational changes, and to discuss issues at both local and national levels.
- ◆ The YOT followed the training plan developed by YOT Managers Cymru to ensure a consistent approach to staff development in the context of meeting national standards and the YJB Training Plan for Wales. The YOT had a strong commitment to ongoing staff development, as evidenced by the inclusion of YOT training needs within the annual Children's Services Social Care Workforce

Development Plan. The plan identified suitable training for YOT staff, including sessional staff, and community panel volunteers accessed through the Children's Services and corporate training programmes. In addition opportunities were also provided through partner agency training provided by the probation area and the Welsh Assembly Government. Attendance at all of these courses was monitored and they were fully supported by the YOT, with all staff attending core training and specialist training according to their particular needs.

- ◆ The current staff group had attained the 80% target set by the YJB for completion of the Professional Certificate of Effective Practice. In addition, one operations manager was undertaking an NVQ 4 in management, and the Senior Practitioner had completed the internal supervision training. Arrangements were being made for all managers to complete the Institute of Leadership and Management Diploma.
- ◆ All staff employed by the YOT, together with sessional workers and community panel members, either had a current CRB check or were in the process of having them updated, and arrangements were in place for checks to be reviewed within three years.
- ◆ Risk assessment procedures were in place and completed for all activities undertaken by the YOT. In addition the YOT operated within the framework of the Local Authority's corporate health and safety policy that covered work activity, control measures and noted any further action required.
- ◆ The YOT management followed the Local Authority corporate policies, procedures and guidance for disciplinary, capability, and grievance matters.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Formal supervision of staff needed to be undertaken on a more consistent basis, particularly for the YOT Manager and administrative staff. Also the YOT should take steps to consider the new supervision policy and procedure for Children's Services and its relevance to the YOT.
- ◆ The Flintshire YOT was one of four YOTs situated within the North Wales police and probation areas. Each YOT appeared to have its own local arrangement with these organisations and greater consistency and effectiveness could be achieved through one basic protocol or SLA covering funding and staff secondments.
- ◆ The YOT had developed its own methodology for measuring its workload and staffing requirements in the absence of any clear formal guidance from the YJB. Given the rapid developments made by the YOT over the last three years in terms of service development and staff recruitment, we felt that some guidance would be useful to provide consistency and to establish whether the YOT was appropriately staffed and 'fit for purpose'.

- ◆ The administrative team did not receive formal individual supervision, but instead received group supervision. The two 'modern apprentices' in the team were supervised by the team administrators.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT

This section is judged as good.

2.

WORK IN THE COURTS

Key judgement:

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

The YOT had a strong and positive relationship with the courts. It provided cover for youth courts in Flintshire and Wrexham, including on Saturdays.

Strengths:

- ◆ The YOT had a dedicated team of highly-skilled court officers supported by trained administrators. New staff were trained and shadowed experienced officers until they were judged competent to undertake the role.
- ◆ A Youth Court protocol was in place and provided guidance on all aspects of court work. The protocol ensured effective and consistent engagement with children and young people by magistrates and ensured that the Youth Court was set up in an informal and less confrontational way than the adult court. With the Youth Court's permission, information notice boards had been purchased by the YOT and displayed appropriate information concerning YOT services and the support available to parents/carers.
- ◆ The YOT was a member of the Youth Court User Group that met quarterly. The group was responsible for reviewing the Youth Court protocol and provided a forum where any concerns could be discussed. The YOT also attended the adult court user meetings. In addition, the YOT manager had regular meetings with the Chair of the Youth Court Magistrates.
- ◆ The YOT also attended the quarterly youth panel and legal advisors meetings, where it kept the court informed of YOT practice through regular presentations and participated in the training and development of magistrates and legal advisers. A feedback form for magistrates had been introduced to enable direct communication to the YOT on any relevant issue, including concerns and compliments. We received very positive feedback from all sources with regard to the service provided by the YOT in court and in magistrates' meetings.
- ◆ The YOT had started to develop the practice of magistrates attending referral order panels, with reciprocal arrangements for panel members to attend the Youth Court. We were able to attend a

successful evening training event for both magistrates and panel members during the inspection.

- ◆ A SLA was in place with the Crown Prosecution Service, who confirmed that the YOT provided accurate, up-to-date and detailed information that helped the court to meet its objectives around the swift administration of justice. The Crown Prosecution Service also described the YOT's work on matters such as bail packages and the risk management of serious offenders, as constructive and effective, saying that it helped the court in its deliberations.
- ◆ Protocols were in place between the YOT and Children's Services. The YOT court officers engaged with Children's Services and Local Authority solicitors during planning meetings for cases where children and young people were remanded to local authority care or custody, or were accommodated or subject to care orders.
- ◆ There was also an agreed protocol under the Prolific and Other Priority Offender Strategy for Prevent and Deter, to ensure that the YOT was consulted by the police and Crown Prosecution Service before an application was made for an anti-social behaviour order. If there was a disagreement, a briefing paper would be prepared for consideration by the Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council and Chief Superintendent of Police for a final decision. No child or young person could be 'named and shamed' in Flintshire without Chief Officer approval.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The Youth Court protocol was not signed or dated, and did not formally specify the arrangements for its review and updating. It could also have been improved by detailing the roles and contributions expected from all parties involved in the court process.
- ◆ The YOT provision for the Crown Court appeared to be operationally sound, but was not subject to any agreement. A protocol did not exist for the Crown Court, and the YOT did not attend the Crown Court User Group.
- ◆ A protocol or SLA would be helpful in the management of relationships between the YOT, the local probation area and the magistrates' court for young people aged 18 and over known to the YOT and appearing in the adult court.

Good practice

The court team held weekly 'debrief meetings' to identify issues to be addressed or areas of good practice, as well as more formal monthly team meetings. Issues from these meetings were either dealt with immediately or referred to YOT staff meetings, management meetings or the magistrates' and court user meetings as appropriate. We found a dynamic process that produced effective communication and helped to drive improvements in standards.

Good practice

Key judgement:

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

Strength:

- ◆ Court duty officers interviewed children and young people and their parents/carers immediately following sentence, and first appointments were made for community orders, attendance centre orders and referral orders at court.

Post-sentence cell interviews were routinely conducted with all children and young people sentenced or remanded to custody and a Court Contact Record Sheet completed. Essential information for custodial facilities was provided and a post-court report prepared. The package sent to the receiving establishment was made up of Asset, the post-court report, sentencing history, PSR, health report, vulnerability assessment and management plan, risk of harm assessments and any other relevant information. If risk was assessed as high, the court officer telephoned the establishment immediately and faxed through the relevant information. Booking forms and documentation, including vulnerability alerts, were also sent by secure email to the YJB Facilities Booking Centre Wales Office.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The YOT needed to strengthen the availability of first appointment arrangements for all court orders following sentence.
- ◆ Information on court orders and processes were not readily available. As a matter of priority, the YOT needed to complete its work on the creating leaflets to provide information on all court orders and processes, so that leaflets could be given for children and young people and their parents/carers following sentence.

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:

- ◆ The YOT covered the regular youth courts and any special courts, to ensure that children and young people could be properly assessed and relevant information provided to the court. It made daily contact with the local police custody suite to identify any possible remand and

ISSP cases and kept a record of those arrested and the outcome of the process.

- ◆ The role of court duty officer had a specific brief to identify remand and ISSP cases, as well as checking any request for Appropriate Adult services. They kept their colleagues informed of any child or young person supervised by the YOT, by recording diary entries on Care Works or contacting the worker directly where appropriate. Clear procedures were in place for dealing with child protection cases and children and young people requiring local authority accommodation.
- ◆ The YOT had a Bail and Remand Worker who provided bail supervision and support programmes for suitable cases. They worked closely with the ISSP for the more serious offenders, and were responsible for accommodation issues. They also ensured that effective liaison was maintained with the courts, secure establishments and local solicitors, to support applications for bail before a Judge in Chambers and the provision of bail support reports. These were completed to a very good standard, providing background information, previous responses to statutory supervision and bail support, risk assessment, and they also specified the supervision and core elements of the programme, including electronic tagging. The report concluded with a clear recommendation to the court.
- ◆ In addition to the Bail and Remand Worker, the YOT had a Parenting Coordinator who undertook assessments, provided support for parents/carers and facilitated a child's or young person's return to home, where appropriate.
- ◆ The YOT had recruited and trained sessional workers as Appropriate Adults, who worked closely with the out-of-hours service and the police, to ensure that children and young people were supported in police custody and returned safely to their own homes.
- ◆ The YOT had established a pool of sessional workers to support children and young people in local authority or hostel temporary accommodation, and were actively seeking to develop suitable options with various housing and accommodation groups.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Despite the efforts of the YOT, there was insufficient accommodation available for children and young people remanded by the court. As a consequence a small minority were placed in inappropriate bed and breakfast accommodation, where it was not possible to adequately assess the risks posed by other residents.
- ◆ The YOT needed to develop its working relationship with Children's Services to ensure a better understanding of each other's respective roles. The provision of appropriate accommodation for children and young people remanded by the court was of particular concern.
- ◆ There did not appear to be a significant remand fostering service in the area, although there was a demand for such provision. The Local

Authority did occasionally obtain placements in the private fostering sector, where the amount and range of accommodation available was out of the YOT's control. Nevertheless, the YOT was represented on a number of housing and accommodation forums and was able to ensure that accommodation issues for children and young people known to the YOT were highlighted.

Good practice

Following each court, the duty officer completed a post-court debrief. This involved recording the sentences passed by the court, the cases remitted to Crown Court and the actions taken to allocate a YOT officer. It also enabled staff to record any concerns or complaints, identify issues requiring either their attention or consideration by the Youth Court User Group. Finally the report identified lessons to be learned and any further training required. These reports were monitored by the YOT Senior Practitioner, and Operations Manager responsible for case management, and action was taken as considered necessary.

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◆ The YOT produced a high standard of PSRs in accordance with the relevant national standards. All staff preparing PSRs had received written instructions with regard to their role and the YOT's expectations of the tasks to be performed. They had received appropriate training and were supported through the process of preparing PSRs. Quality assurance processes involved the scrutiny of all reports by the Senior Practitioner to make sure that standards were maintained. Efforts were made to ensure that PSRs were appropriate and impartial, were free of jargon and discriminating language.
- ◆ We found that each PSR had been checked using a Quality Control Checklist for Court Reports. This checklist covered basic information such as; the report type, child or young person concerned, author, date of court and date of quality control, plus detailed consideration of the offence analysis, assessment of the child or young person, risk assessment, proposal and conclusion, as well as the victim assessment and report.
- ◆ Each PSR was based on Asset, and the child or young person and their parents/carers were interviewed at least once for the specific purpose of writing the report.

- ◆ Information was obtained from all relevant sources. Conclusions contained clear proposals for sentencing, were commensurate with the seriousness of the offence and were easily understood by children and young people and their parents/carers.
- ◆ Immediate allocation following committal from the Youth Court to the Crown Court ensured that high-risk cases were tracked, and timely and accurate information was provided to the court.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Whilst PSRs met national standards, consideration needed to be given to shortening their length and improving their presentation.
- ◆ The quality assurance process placed too great a reliance on the Senior Practitioner. Consideration needed to be given to sharing this task in order to provide more variety and a wider range of expertise in the team, so that cover was immediately available in the event of any unplanned absence.
- ◆ The quality assurance process did not include appraisal of Asset or the *What do you think?* form. It could also be supported by the introduction of other quality control processes, such as sampling and audits. The information collated in this way could be used to inform staff development and training programmes, as well as enhancing existing practice.

Good practice

Report authors took the PSR to the child or young people and their parents/carers on the Thursday evening before court on a Friday. This provided an opportunity for the report and its recommendations to be considered fully, and for the child or young person and their family to be briefed with regard to court processes and court orders.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK IN THE COURTS

This section is judged as excellent.

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.*

Flintshire County Council, in partnership with the police and other agencies, had taken action to ensure that the prevention of criminal and anti-social behaviour was tackled on a multi-disciplinary basis. Through the Community Safety Partnership and the implementation of the Prolific and Other Priority Offender initiative, arrangements were made within the framework established by the Prevent and Deter Guidance issued by the Home Office in September 2004. The Anti-Social Review Group was established and chaired by the YOT Operations Manager who led a team within the YOT specialising in prevention work.

Strengths:

- ◇ The Prevent and Deter Panel was chaired by the YOT Operations Manager responsible for prevention, with membership from the police, social services, health, community and housing, leisure, environmental health and the Youth Service. The panel operated to a protocol amended and agreed in September 2005 by the Community Safety Partnership Executive. It had representation and links at strategic and operational levels with all relevant partnerships, including the Community Safety Partnership and its sub-groups, the Substance Misuse Action Team and Youth Crime Prevention Group, and the MAPPA.
- ◇ The Prevent and Deter Panel had a rigorous procedure in place for receiving and dealing with referrals from a range of agencies. On receipt of a referral the panel discussed the individual, the behaviour and risk presented and shared pertinent information before devising an individual action plan. The first stage involved a referral for assessment from the YOT using Onset, which included information from a range of sources such as housing associations, education departments, community police officers and others as appropriate. Following this assessment, arrangements were made for an initial planning meeting to arrange an action plan aimed at reducing the level of anti-social behaviour. Depending on progress and compliance, decisions were taken to adhere to a protocol of tiered interventions, which could include an acceptable behaviour contract. Throughout the process the opportunity existed to refer the child or young person to

any of the relevant statutory or voluntary agencies. Should the informal processes fail, if the child or young person was on a statutory order, action could be taken to commence court proceedings for a criminal anti-social behaviour order.

- ◆ In addition to the Prevent and Deter Panel, the YOT operated a range of services in partnership with other agencies. There were close links with Local Authority Children's Services with regard to the child protection procedures, in which all YOT staff had received basic training. Furthermore, Children's Services also convened multi-disciplinary 'positive outcomes' meetings involving the child or young person and parents/carers, to discuss progress and review the action planned in individual cases. The meetings had replaced 'children in need meetings' and enabled the YOT to access a range of additional services to support and divert children and young people from offending.
- ◆ The YOT had started an initiative with ASDA supermarket for children and young people caught shoplifting, under the 'Home Office Clear Ups', and was in the process of piloting a one-off offending behaviour session. A restorative justice programme had also been introduced within local schools linked to the final warning programme and the YOT Education Worker attended behavioural/pastoral sessions at local high schools to offer support to targeted children and young people.
- ◆ We found positive working relationships with the local police and a range of agencies working in the community. The YOT attended the Neighbourhood Crime and Disorder Forum and, together with the police and other agencies, participated in a successful Environmental Action Day in October 2005.

Good practice

The YOT participated fully in an Environmental Action Day planned on a multi-agency basis. The objectives of the day were to improve the immediate environment and reduce the risk of fire related incidents and anti-social behaviour. The YOT made specific commitments to:

- ◆ involve children and young people on community orders with unpaid work requirements in helping with tasks on the day
- ◆ distribute information regarding parenting support, anti-social behaviour and access to support services
- ◆ consider accessing community-based projects for reparation and other initiatives
- ◆ conduct a review of the day.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ More work needed to be undertaken with Children's Services, education and schools to increase the number of relevant referrals made to the Prevent and Deter Panel.

- ◇ A cut in YJB funding for 2006/2007 would impact on the YOT's capacity to meet the growing demands for preventative services in general. Other services, such as the Parenting Support Service, were only grant-aided until 2008 by the Welsh Assembly Government Cymorth Fund, causing some uncertainty about their long-term prospects.
- ◇ Whilst there was a range of resources available, the YOT needed to continue to develop its prevention services and ensure that processes were in place for monitoring and evaluating their effectiveness.

3.2 Work with children and young people who have offended

Key judgement:

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

We were impressed by the work of staff in assessing children and young people through a multi-disciplinary approach, and providing appropriate interventions that were delivered on a one-to-one basis or a group basis, where appropriate. The YOT staff had an impressive knowledge of the individuals referred to them, and of their community and the networks within it. Staff professionalism and commitment was not only effective but also valued by children and young people, their parents/carers, other agencies and, especially the courts. During the course of the inspection we witnessed an exceptionally high level of personal commitment and direct evidence of team work and support.

Strengths:

- ◇ Of the case files we examined, 77% of assessments were completed within the timescale contained in the relevant national standard and 80% were of adequate quality.
- ◇ All referrals to the YOT were subject to an Asset assessment and in 91% of cases there was a close fit between the interventions planned and the assessed risk of harm.
- ◇ Steps were taken in the initial supervision and training review plan to ensure that children and young people were aware of the requirements of the order or licence in 83% of cases. We found that this area was given the highest priority, with YOT staff explaining the requirements and the consequences of failing to adhere to them clearly. The use of behavioural contracts, and signed and agreed intervention plans and reviews, reinforced the process by emphasising compliance and engagement.
- ◇ Case managers used Asset to inform the initial planning meeting and subsequent review meetings, and modified the intervention plan accordingly. Planning and review meetings were multi-disciplinary and

normally included the child or young person, parents/carers, YOT case manager, specialist YOT services, police, head teachers, referral panel members and others in a position to contribute to the delivery of the intervention plan. Specific areas identified as increasing the risk of further offending were targeted for intervention by the case manager and/or specialist YOT services and, where required, referred to other agencies.

- ◆ The YOT had a bank of resources that case managers and specialist staff accessed and used in motivating and addressing offending behaviour. Interventions were varied, involving individual work and group work with children and young people and their families, and life and independent living skills. Targets were set to reduce the risk of reoffending whilst maintaining close links with schools, colleges and training and employment opportunities.
- ◆ Overall, we saw some very good work with children and young people. We were impressed by individual work undertaken on offending behaviour, misuse of drugs and alcohol, and work with victims and community reparation. There were some excellent projects available, in addition to the planned educational provision, to support children and young people's informal learning and prevent further offending. These included community schemes and developmental workshops involving cognitive behaviour work, sporting activities, building dry stonewalls, painting, environmental work, and the development of life and independent living skills. There was also a positive relationship with the Youth Justice Centre that offered a comprehensive service to support the work of the YOT across the complete range of statutory orders.
- ◆ We also saw some excellent work, undertaken as part of the Parent Support Programme, aimed at improving family relationships and preventing reoffending. Intervention programmes followed an assessment, and could be voluntary running alongside the child or young person's programme, or based on a parent contract specifying what was expected from the parents/carers and what the YOT would provide in return, or as part of a statutory parenting order.
- ◆ The YOT was also able to access Family Group Conferences for suitable children and young people on the final warning programme and thereby reduce offending behaviour.
- ◆ There was evidence from the case file sample that 92% of the children and young people complied with the conditions of the order or licence.
- ◆ Breach and recall action took place within the national standard timescale in all cases.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Only 42% of ISPs met the national standard and contained SMART objectives.

- ◇ Children and young people completed a *What do you think form?* in only 42% of the cases examined.
- ◇ We were concerned about a number of matters regarding the assessment and management of risk of serious harm. A risk of serious harm Asset had been completed in only 58% of the relevant cases we examined and those identified as medium or high risk of harm had been reviewed by a manager in only 57% of the relevant cases.
- ◇ The YOT was in the process of developing a risk management strategy focusing on reoffending, vulnerability and serious harm. This work was in progress and changes arising from the issues discussed were included in an action plan. The YOT needed to finalise this work and develop training for staff in its application.
- ◇ North Wales Police had adopted the Home Office/YJB guidance (2002) for the delivery of final warnings. The quality of assessment and intervention failed to meet national standards and the process was under review at the time of the inspection. The police notified the YOT within one day of the decision to issue a final warning in only 14% of cases and victims details in 50% of cases. Victims were invited to participate in the final warning process in 40% of cases. The YOT carried out an assessment of the child or young person within ten working days in just 38% of cases and the final warning was delivered in 20 working days in 63% of cases.
- ◇ The YOT had identified several areas for development in the self-assessment completed as part of the inspection process. It had decided that it needed to improve its effectiveness in undertaking basic literacy and numeracy assessments by using the Plus Programme developed by the Arts Council and YJB. It had also decided to train staff in the use of the Jigsaw programme in order to provide a greater range of interventions at a number of levels and give staff with more options in day-to-day practice. Finally it was beginning to consider ways of developing more specific programmes for girls and young women.
- ◇ The YOT had recognised the need to become more effective in measuring its own performance and user satisfaction, and was in the process of appointing a performance management and information officer for this purpose.

Good practice

An annual, ten-session long, athletics programme, based at Deeside College, had been developed for children and young people who were at risk of offending and had no previous experience of a range of sports covered in physical education, due to poor school attendance. The programme focused on building confidence and creating a new interest by challenging children and young people to achieve their potential and desist from criminal and antisocial behaviour. One young person was particularly skilled in the pole vault and had begun formal training for the event outside of the programme. In addition, all children and young people gained a certificate for their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The YOT had also used a group of children and young people's interest in football to encourage them to attend the college regularly and start accessing a range of interventions designed to prevent offending and reoffending.

These programmes were enthusiastically supported by YOT staff.

Key judgement:

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

We found that the YOT had given a great deal of attention to the health and well-being of children and young people. It had appointed staff and introduced appropriate procedures and methods for assessing and meeting health needs.

Strengths:

- ◆ The YOT Operations Manager responsible for prevention and the Specialist Health Worker both held appropriate qualifications and were highly experienced in their field. Similarly, the Substance Misuse Worker, who was seconded to the YOT from the Cyngor Alcohol Information Service, had relevant work experience and qualifications.
- ◆ The YOT had a health panel that met weekly to allocate new cases and monitor existing cases. The panel was normally chaired by the Operations Manager responsible for prevention and included the Substance Misuse Worker and Specialist Nurse Adviser. Other agencies were also invited, when necessary, to contribute to individual cases and discuss possible service developments.
- ◆ Services had been developed with the Youth Service Substance Misuse Team through peer-support education and health days in local schools. There was a joint initiative funded by the Welsh Assembly Government to develop an information shop and drug treatment centre in an area of high need. A review of the content of the drug

and alcohol workshop used under the final warning scheme had also been undertaken.

- ◆ Clear referral procedures were in place, using Asset or Onset scores on physical, emotional and mental health. Physical health referrals were made, as appropriate, to the relevant national health services. For emotional and mental health, children and young people scoring two or more on Asset were assessed under the national SQIFA assessment tool for mental health and were reviewed every four to six weeks. Anyone scoring three or more was referred to the health panel for a full assessment.
- ◆ The health panel had also introduced a substance misuse screening mechanism that provided more detailed information on the actual usage of substances by children and young people. It had clear arrangements in place for informing children and young people of the status of their involvement and the consequence of non-compliance if subject to a court order. Once assessed, the YOT had four levels of intervention. Levels one and two involved the provision of information and advice, with direct work on harm reduction involving a Substance Misuse Worker and other YOT staff as appropriate. Levels three and four focused on chronic or more serious cases, involving the Substance Misuse Worker and other YOT staff with possible referral to CAMHS and the community drug and alcohol services. There was also a fast-track facility to the ADHD team and the National Children's Homes Family Project.
- ◆ The YOT had a range of appropriate interventions that included one-to-one work, a harm reduction programme, drug and alcohol group work, alternative therapies such as acupuncture, and a home 'detox' programme co-worked with the Adult Drug and Alcohol Team. The services could be offered in English and Welsh, with a choice of male and female workers.
- ◆ The Specialist Nurse Adviser on the health panel received clinical supervision from CAMHS and had developed a clinical pathway to the service to ensure that appropriate referrals were made from the YOT. One of the YOT operations managers was a member of the CAMHS strategy group and was able to ensure that the needs of the YOT client group were considered when planning and reviewing services.
- ◆ The case file analysis showed that 6% of children and young people had physical health needs, 45% showed evidence of drug misuse and 35% of alcohol misuse. Furthermore, 30% were considered to have emotional and mental health needs. We were pleased to note that all (100%) of the physical, and mental health cases had been appropriately referred, as well as 88% of drug and alcohol misuse cases. It was also noted that improvement was apparent in 68% of the cases where Asset had been reviewed.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The Substance Misuse Worker was not DANOS accredited and, although she had considerable previous relevant experience, should, we felt, be supported in her intention to qualify. Her secondment agreement had not been finally agreed and there had been a lack of clarity over supervision arrangements, which were in the process of being resolved.
- ◆ There were no specialist substance misuse rehabilitation facilities available locally and we were informed that there was an insufficient capacity for these services in general.
- ◆ There was no protocol or SLA in place between the YOT and CAMHS and there was no emergency mental health provision available out-of-hours. Whilst a clinical pathway to CAMHS had been established, there were difficulties in accessing services for acute mental health referrals due to the lack of appropriate CAMHS provision for this group of children and young people.
- ◆ We were informed that the YOT required more specialist health provision to meet the current demand and a business case had been prepared for the Management Board providing evidence that if the specialist health worker post was increased to full-time, there would be an increased capacity for CAMHS to see acute referrals.
- ◆ We found no evidence of a clinical audit of the mental health needs of children and young people.

Good practice

The YOT had collected data directly from children and young people appearing before the Youth Court, over the period from August 2004 to July 2005, and had published a report for consideration by all appropriate agencies. The information obtained in this way confirmed that substance misuse was a common factor in a significant number of cases appearing before the Youth Court for sentence and required a multi-agency response. The work underpinned a successful bid by the YOT and the Youth Service to the Welsh Assembly Government, to establish a joint project to develop an information shop and drug treatment centre in an area of high need.

Key judgement:

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

We were confident that children and young people were being safeguarded consistently through the work of the YOT, but there was room for improvement. We found good quality supervision and support, and a willingness to learn, develop and improve practice. We found that the

issues of risk and vulnerability, when drawn to the YOT's attention, were addressed immediately by the YOT management and an action plan produced with responsibility and timescales specified.

Strengths:

- ◆ The case file sample showed that appropriate action had been taken if a child or young person had been considered vulnerable from themselves or others in 86% of cases. Furthermore, interventions had been carried out proportionate to the child or young person's risk of harm and likelihood of reoffending in 86% of the sample. There was also a close fit between the interventions planned and the assessed risk of harm in 91% of cases. The Asset core profile was therefore being used appropriately to identify risk of reoffending and vulnerability, and a risk management plan was completed and reviewed on a planned basis.
- ◆ There were agreed processes in place for information sharing, and strategy meetings with the police, Children's Services and other agencies were utilized to develop risk and vulnerability management plans. These plans were used to focus attention and resources, and develop appropriate responses by the child or young person and their family. There were good links with Children's Services, with staff being invited to attend legal planning, Looked After Children, child protection and positive outcome meetings. Children's Services social workers attended case conferences and reviews arranged by the YOT, and were involved in MAPPA and Prevent and Deter meetings.
- ◆ The YOT Manager was a member of the ACPC, which was to become the Safeguarding Board from 1 April 2006.
- ◆ All YOT staff had received basic child protection training and information on child support and prevention thresholds. They were therefore, fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to the child protection procedures. They were involved in strategy discussions, initial case conferences, core groups and review conferences.
- ◆ Several members of staff had received specialist training on the assessment and the management of children and young people involved in sexually abusive behaviours and were provided with ongoing support. Other staff were provided with opportunities to have case consultation with specialist workers as well as normal supervision, and had access to a range of resources for working with children and young people and their families.
- ◆ Protocols were in place with Children's Services and further education colleges to ensure, when appropriate, that where a child or young person was suspected of engagement in sexually aggressive behaviours, college placements were maintained and risk management issues shared and monitored. Prior to charge, cases were discussed with the police and Children's Services, and decisions made concerning the risk management of the case and charge.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Whilst there were good working relationships with Children's Services and other agencies, we were informed by YOT staff that awareness training was required with partner and other agencies, in order to promote the work of the YOT and achieve a better understanding at management and operational levels.
- ◆ We found examples of vulnerable children and young people that required accommodation being placed in unsuitable bed and breakfast facilities as there were no other places available. This required urgent attention by the Management Board.

Key judgement:

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

There was a good working relationship between the YOT Education Worker and the LEA officers. This good cooperation helped children and young people obtain the support they needed. The LEA and the YOT regularly exchanged information about all school age children and young people, and all had individual education plans and received assistance to access education. The LEA also had a useful tracking system in place that enabled it to know what education each child or young person had received. However, neither the LEA or the YOT evaluated the impact of their support on improvements in children and young people's attendance or attainment.

Strengths:

- ◆ The YOT used the Basic Skills Agency initial assessment tool to assess children and young people's numeracy and literacy skills. These assessments were normally completed by the YOT case managers, who could request the assistance of the Education Worker in appropriate cases. The Education Worker had a first degree in sports science, a masters degree in psychology, and various coaching certificates relevant to the post, together with experience of teaching and lecturing.
- ◆ The Education Worker made direct contact with LEA officers to arrange college placements and home tuition, and also attended the Behaviour Management Team meetings, which involved the discussion of individual cases and agreeing action to be taken by the LEA and YOT. These actions were then reviewed as agreed. The Education Worker also liaised well with the Inclusion Welfare Officer and attended to school behavioural meetings to ensure a joint approach to improving children and young people's school attendance and behaviour. When children and young people were excluded from school, there was a prompt exchange of information and alternative provision was made available as quickly as possible.

- ◆ The YOT and LEA planning supported those children and young people who attended school full-time very effectively. Children and young people supervised by the YOT who did not have full-time school places had planned education packages that took account of their previous school attendance, and their disciplinary records. YOT staff arranged transport to enable a child or young person to attend school, college and careers interviews to further the opportunities available.
- ◆ The YOT had a variety of alternative educational provision available including Careers Wales, Youth Gateway, Phoenix Project, Breakthrough, and the Prince's Trust. It also had a good range of activities on offer such as life-skills courses, cognitive behaviour work, sporting activities, dry stone walling, painting, environmental work and independent living skills. Registration with the Open College Network enabled children and young people to obtain credits from some of these activities and helped them towards the attainment of more formal qualifications.
- ◆ The Community Safety Partnership funded the production of two project workbooks *Respect* and *Will Powers* in partnership with Flintshire County Council, North Wales Police, North Wales Probation, North East Wales National Health Service Trust and Cyngor Alcohol Information Service. *Respect* and *Will Powers* involved completing a workbook with an appropriate person and helped children and young people think about ways of changing their behaviour. *Respect* tackled bullying and *Will Powers* focused on an introduction to drugs education for 7-11 year olds. Both workbooks were intended to help identify and tackle the issues raised, and assist children and young people to make good and informed choices.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Although the LEA and the YOT worked well together to support children and young people of compulsory school age, 29% received less than ten hours of education provision per week. The case file analysis indicated that 74% of children and young people had experienced difficulty with their schooling and action had been taken in 80% of these cases, but was often inadequate.
- ◆ Young people over school age were not supported as well as those aged 16 and under. Of those aged 16 and over, the case file sample indicated that 49% were not in ETE and only 44% had had contact with a Careers Wales adviser. We found that the SLA between the YOT and Careers Wales North East provided a good basis for joint working but needed to specify the resource commitments and expectations of each partner. Partners' commitments were not sufficiently clear to help on-going monitoring or the evaluation of the success of this joint working.
- ◆ The YOT had a good menu of community-based projects which it made available to the children and young people it supervised.

However, it was not clear how these projects contributed to their overall educational development or achievements. In many instances, opportunities for community-based projects and activities were made available in a gender biased way. This failed to challenge the underlying gender stereotyping by the children and young people, YOT officers or project staff.

- ◆ The Education Worker was only employed part-time. The LEA and the YOT had both identified the need for this post to be full-time and for the post holder to have sufficient seniority to ensure that children and young people had better access to their entitlements.
- ◆ The LEA had a useful tracking system in place, that enabled officers to know what education each child or young person had received. However, neither the LEA or the YOT used this information effectively to track improvements in attendance, behaviour and attainment of the children and young people supervised by the YOT. They were therefore, unable to draw conclusions about the contribution made by the additional support from the YOT and the LEA.

Good practice

The YOT provided the Breakthrough course in partnership with Careers Wales North East. The programme helped children and young people build skills such as team work, building their personal curriculum vitas and building confidence. Through this programme they were able to access the opportunities provided by Youth Gateway.

Key judgement:

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

User consultation was a regular focus of every planning and review meeting chaired by a manager. All children and young people and parents/carers were asked to contribute to the targets and were consulted on their views on progress during review meetings. A user satisfaction questionnaire had been devised for each aspect of the YOT's work, but the collation of this data had not yet informed more effective practice. A complaints leaflet had been introduced and all children and young people were given copies at their induction interview. This process encouraged compliments as well as complaints.

Strengths:

- ◆ Children and young people were asked to complete a generic user satisfaction questionnaire covering all court orders and final warnings. They were invited to suggest improvements and to give their views on whether orders had been fully explained, and, when relevant, to

comment on their experience of the referral order panel and final warning process.

- ◆ The YOT also had a questionnaire for completion by children and young people on statutory orders who had attended an offending behaviour workshop. These covered topics such as anger management, drugs and alcohol, offending behaviour, *'Prison! Me? No way!'*, sexual health and relationships. Service users were asked to comment on content, location and timing, and to suggest ways of making improvements.
- ◆ A bilingual complaints procedure was in place and explanatory leaflets were used to explain the procedure to children and young people, as well as being displayed prominently in offices and on various notice boards. The leaflets were clear, outlining the individual's rights and explaining the process for making complaints, including a freephone number.
- ◆ Bilingual satisfaction questionnaires were also available for victims, parents/carers and those involved in ISSP.
- ◆ The views of children and young people were collected and reports were provided for the Youth Court User Group, Youth Forum, Community Safety Partnership forums and the Young People's Partnership.
- ◆ Only three children and young people were interviewed during the inspection and all reported very good and helpful relationships with YOT staff. One stated that he would have failed without support, and another was pleased that her YOT worker and social worker were working together to help her change her behaviour. Two parents/carers were also interviewed and both were very happy with the way they had been supported personally by the Parenting Support Worker and the work that had been undertaken. They both believed that their child's risks of further offending had been reduced and relationships at home had improved. One hoped that her son would continue to make small improvements, but feared that his anger could place him at risk of harm. Children and young people interviewed were in the main pleased with their involvement with the YOT.
- ◆ The children and young people said:
 - *"I like doing the work with my YOT worker and it stops me getting into trouble. I can talk about my feelings and what I need to do to change my life and go back to my family."*
 - *"The YOT are good and interesting and try to help you every little bit."*
 - *"They kept me busy during the week and weekends, and were helpful."*
 - *"The social services and YOT both work together and have changed my life for the better."*

- ◇ Parents/carers said:
 - *"Very helpful and fantastic with me and the kids. They care, its not just their job they do more and I was not just a statistic."*
 - *"Things are very much better, [the child or young person is] less challenging of mother."*
 - *"It has been very helpful and needs to continue for some time. A big confidence boost when support [is] offered after the order lapses."*

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ Feedback from complaint investigations and user surveys was not utilised consistently through an agreed evaluation and reporting system.
- ◇ The YOT reported that it needed training on Viewpoint and intended to establish a users' forum.
- ◇ The ISSP assurance review recommended arranging a regular meeting as a group for feedback to inform practice and promote service development.

3.3 Work with parents/carers

Key judgement:

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

The YOT had a Parenting Coordinator who had been in post since June 2004, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government Cymorth Grant until 2008. The YOT aimed to develop a service for parents/carers that offered appropriate levels of advice and support to enable them to address their child's anti-social or offending behaviour, and regain control and influence on their child's life.

The court had not issued any parenting orders, preferring to support the voluntary parenting programmes.

Strengths:

- ◇ The Parenting Coordinator was well qualified and experienced, and had developed a comprehensive set of policies and procedures covering all aspects of working with parents/carers. She also engaged with staff development and kept them informed of parenting issues. The YOT was in the process of recruiting two sessional workers, thereby increasing its capacity to work with parents/carers.
- ◇ The YOT had three clear referral routes in place covering children and young people from aged 8-17 years. These were preventive work and anti-social behaviour, final warnings and bail support, and community and secure orders. Assessments in the first instance were completed

by a YOT officer, informed by the initial Asset and Onset scores. Scores of three and four triggered a full in-depth assessment by the Parenting Coordinator. Both assessments followed a robust and comprehensive pro forma and took account of literacy, diversity and cultural needs.

- ◆ The initial assessment outcome made a distinction between four levels of intervention based on Asset and Onset scores. No further action was taken with level one cases, level two provision consisted of advice and guidance. Level three involved a further parenting assessment by the Parenting Coordinator using an assessment tool developed by the YJB in conjunction with the Trust for the Study of Adolescence. Level four cases were referred for specialist assessment could involve CAMHS, drug and alcohol or domestic violence services, Children's Services and child protection. At this stage the assessment was considered and a decision made about whether parenting support was required or not.
- ◆ Following the second assessment, services could be provided at three levels. Level two consisted of advice and information. Level three had three options: voluntary parenting intervention, parenting contract and parenting order. Level four involved a specialist referral to CAMHS and drug and alcohol services. All levels of intervention were reviewed in accordance with Asset and Onset, and where appropriate a final review and evaluation was undertaken.
- ◆ Tailor-made programmes were developed and could include one-to-one sessions, family agreement work, group work and the Escape 12-week programme. Parallel work was also undertaken with the child or young person by a YOT officer to reinforce the work with parents/carers. The Parenting Coordinator attended initial planning meetings and reviews as necessary.
- ◆ All parents/carers were invited to initial planning meetings and reviews of statutory court orders, and to comment on the targets set. They received copies of correspondence for all children and young people aged under 16, and for those over 16 with their consent. Leaflets had been developed to inform parents/carers of their role and responsibilities as an appropriate adult and how to support their child in court and during their orders.
- ◆ There were close links between the police and the parenting service as part of the Prevent and Deter processes.
- ◆ The case file analysis showed that for children and young people under 16 years of age, parents/carers were interviewed and involved in 80% of cases. Parents/carers were kept informed of development in 93% of cases and the specific individual needs of children and young people, as identified by their parent/carer, were addressed in 88% of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Whilst parents/carers were visited and supported and also invited to meetings, only 23% were involved in a planned parenting intervention. However, it should be noted that this was in the context of a national average of 14% under phase three YOT inspections.
- ◆ Appropriate liaison with parents/carers whose children were subject to DTOs took place in two of the three relevant cases examined.
- ◆ The YOT was aware that it was weak on the monitoring and evaluation of parenting programmes and interventions, but was addressing the issue. The Parenting Coordinator planned to tackle this matter as part of her final module of the Professional Certificate of Effective Practice to be completed in June 2006.

Good practice

A single mother with four children was finding it extremely difficult to cope and unable to engage with or impact on her son's criminal behaviour in the context of home, community and peer group. He was placed on a supervision order and ISSP, and a multi-disciplinary package put in place that included electronic monitoring and the involvement of the Parenting Coordinator.

The combined efforts of the YOT worker, working with the young person, and the Parenting Coordinator who supported the family, changed the young person's behaviour and provided the mother with the necessary skills to cope.

The young person was made to face up to his responsibilities by being breached for non-compliance. The parent was involved in a one-to-one parenting skills programme and supported by *Sure Start*. The young person complied with the conditions of his order, engaged positively in a work programme with the result that stress at home reduced significantly.

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

This section is judged as good.

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.*

DTO cases were held by all YOT officers, and specialist staff were appointed to ensure consistency and continuity through from sentence to discharge. The Court Resettlement Officer was involved with the child or young person during the custodial part of the sentence to ensure that accommodation needs were highlighted and addressed as a priority, and withdrew from the case following release from custody.

The Flintshire YOT in common with other Welsh YOTs was concerned that young people from Wales were, in the main, placed in English establishments considerable distances away from their home areas. The travelling distances involved impacted on the children and young people and their families, and also on the YOT staff involved in through-care. Short sentences could be a particular problem since children and young people were unable to access certain courses and programmes due to the length of the sentence.

Strengths:

- ◆ All of the six children and young people in the relevant case sample were interviewed immediately following sentence, and all the relevant paperwork sent immediately to the young offenders institution with the child or young person via the custody envelope.
- ◆ During the period of adjournment the child or young person and their family were prepared for the possibility of custody. The initial assessment met the national standard in terms of timeliness, quality and the involvement of the child or young person in all cases. It also addressed and reflected the specific individual needs of each child or young person. Parents/carers were interviewed and involved in the assessment in the majority of appropriate cases. Furthermore, all relevant assessments and information were sent to the secure establishment within 24 hours.
- ◆ Risk and vulnerability factors were assessed in the post-court report and any serious concerns communicated immediately by telephone and fax prior to the child or young person's arrival.
- ◆ For Looked After Children, the YOT consulted with Children's Services, attended Looked After Children reviews and took action when they

were considered vulnerable in all cases. This information was also included in the initial assessment.

- ◇ An appropriate referral was made in all cases assessed as having a physical or emotional and/or mental health need, or evidence of drug and alcohol misuse. In addition, arrangements were made to meet these assessed needs prior to release in all cases.
- ◇ A full risk of serious harm Asset had been completed in all cases, and those assessed as medium or high risk of harm were referred to a manager. Not all the files contained evidence that the manager had reviewed the case on a regular basis.
- ◇ Video link facilities were available and used by partner agencies such as Careers Wales, housing and Children's Services to interview children and young people without visiting the secure establishment.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ Few of children and young people had contributed to their assessment by completing the *What do you think?* form.
- ◇ There was evidence to suggest that children and young people had experienced difficulty with their schooling in all cases, and that the action taken was only sufficient in a third of the cases.
- ◇ For children and young people not Looked After, but in need of possible safeguarding due to the sentence imposed, liaison between the YOT officer and Children's Services took place in only less than half of the relevant cases examined.

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.*

DTO cases received a high priority and were allocated to suitably qualified and experienced members of the team. All children and young people were visited wherever placed and such visits would often be undertaken jointly with a member of the Children's Services team.

Strengths:

- ◇ A YOT or ISSP workers was assigned to each case to track and monitor all aspects of the custodial phase. These workers were involved in the initial and final training plans, and ensured that they were informed by Asset in all cases. There was a close fit between interventions planned and the assessed risk of harm. Contact was also maintained with the child or young person and the secure establishment by telephone, fax, electronic mail, letter and personal visits.

- ◆ If a young person was placed in a secure establishment a great distance from home, the YOT made an application for them to be transferred nearer to their home to facilitate family and YOT staff visits.
- ◆ The YOT/ISSP worker attended all review meetings, and ensured that any issues relating to health and ETE were taken back to the YOT for action. In addition parents/carers were encouraged to attend DTO meetings.
- ◆ YOT officers received copies of relevant information from Children's Services regarding individual children and young people involved with child protection or Looked After Children, and known to both agencies. Young people who were disabled or who had learning difficulties were allocated to appropriately skilled staff, and gender issues were also taken into consideration when cases were allocated.
- ◆ YOT staff facilitated transport arrangements so that parents/carers could attend planning and review meetings wherever possible. For cases outside a fifty mile radius, team pool cars were available for use by staff.
- ◆ Information gained from the time spent in custody informed licence conditions.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The YOT, in its self-assessment, stated that it did not receive prior notification of transfers between custodial establishments. In addition, the disbandment of the Secure Estate Forum had removed a formal mechanism for addressing both specific and general issues relating to links between the custodial and community phases of a sentence.
- ◆ The views of the home education and training organisations, was only presented to the initial planning meeting, in half the cases. At the end of the sentence the child or young person had not been reassessed for literacy and numeracy using the YJB approved assessment format in two thirds of the case sample.
- ◆ The case file analysis indicated that the initial training plan did not meet the content requirements of the national standards with regard to SMART objectives in the majority of the cases. Consequently the plans did not support planned progression for children or young people either in custody or following discharge to the community.
- ◆ Training plans did not clearly set out how learning would be achieved or what accreditation would be obtained. From the case sample analysis, no children or young people had been engaged in further education and training post-16, and only 40% were assessed for literacy and numeracy using the YJB approved assessment format. In only a quarter of the sample, children and young people's individual learning plans had been regularly reviewed following release, updated and shared with relevant providers.

Good practice

A young man sentenced to a DTO, and considered to be a risk to the public due to his behaviour, was already known to a local CAMHS Consultant. Arrangements were facilitated by the YOT for this Consultant and the Consultant Psychiatrist covering the secure establishment to undertake a full assessment of the young person's needs and plan for his management in the community following discharge under the MAPPA.

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:

- ◆ Preparation for meeting children and young people's needs was made at pre-release meetings, either by attendance of the relevant member of staff or through YOT staff liaising with partner agencies. Following release, planning and review meetings were held at regular intervals and involved the child or young person, their parents/carers and officers from the secure estate.
- ◆ With regard to managing attendance and enforcement, steps were taken to ensure that the child or young person understood the requirements of the licence in all the cases were analysed. Furthermore, the frequency of appointments, and judgements about acceptability and unacceptability of absence and breach/recall action was also achieved in accord with the national standard in all the cases analysed.
- ◆ Whilst progress against initial training plan objectives had been reviewed to national standards in only half the cases examined, we found that work commenced in custody had continued in the community for all cases. In this context the YOT worker/ISSP team tailored the child or young person's timetable to meet individual needs, as well as the core elements of the plan, to help with the transition back into the community.
- ◆ Throughout the licence period, contacts were maintained with the child or young person in accordance with the national standard and included home visits. We found some significant improvements as a result, in family and personal relationships, lifestyle, substance use, thinking and behaviour and attitude to offending.
- ◆ Young persons considered a high risk to the community or other people were subject to MAPPA and a protection plan formulated. There were close links between ISSP, police and probation to ensure that those considered high risk were reintegrated into the community.

- ◇ We found that there was no evidence of criminal activity in 80% of the case files examined and the most recent Asset score had showed an improvement in 80% of the cases analysed.
- ◇ Mid-point Assets were completed in most cases and a risk management strategy was developed immediately where there was evidence of increased risk.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ Due to a lack of provision, the majority of children and young people aged under 16 would not receive their statutory entitlement to education.
- ◇ Progress on criminogenic factors for children and young people, showed no change with regard to statutory education pre-16, and an improvement of 17% only for ETE post-16.
- ◇ A very small number of children and young people released from custody were placed in bed and breakfast accommodation, either within or outside the local authority area. They were consequently isolated from their support systems and vulnerable. The Local Authority realised that this situation could not be allowed to continue and had established a working group chaired by the YOT Manager in order to try and find a solution. This would appear to be a relevant matter for the Management Board to resolve.

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◇ The YOT was strongly committed to improving the life chances of children and young people sentenced to DTOs and had allocated a significant percentage of its resources to this work.
- ◇ The YOT was particularly effective in meeting the national standards with regard to assessment, safeguarding, planning and discharge on licence.
- ◇ Significant progress was being made with individual children and young people and criminogenic factors were being tackled by the YOT. The comparison between the initial, interim and most recent Asset score showed that its interventions were effective in most areas.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ The education and training needs of children and young people on DTO licences were not sufficiently addressed. None of the case file sample aged 16 and over had been engaged in further education or

training. Also, three-quarters of the plans had not been reviewed, updated and shared with relevant providers. Action to tackle difficulties with school had not been successful in two thirds of the case file sample.

- ◆ The YOT did not have up-to-date and accurate information on recidivism rates, but was working to improve the Care Works data.

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

This section is judged as good.

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.*

As part of the inspection we were able to interview five adult victims, all of whom reported that they were very pleased to be involved in the process. They stated that they had a clear understanding of what was involved. Some of their comments were worth noting:

- ◇ *"A helpful and positive experience, it reduced my anxiety, and enabled me to feel part of restitution/rehabilitation."*
- ◇ *"Generally very good through to and during the panel meeting, but would wish for more follow up information regarding the outcome for the offender."*
- ◇ *"Very happy with the process but not with feedback on rehabilitation."*
- ◇ *"Feels good to be connected to the process."*
- ◇ *"Very pleased with the restorative process and have not had a window smashed in school for at least five weeks which was previously unheard of!"*

Strengths:

- ◇ The court team had been expanded and trained to ensure that the focus on victims was maintained throughout the court process. Robust procedures had been put in place with the court administration and Crown Prosecution Service, so that victim details were available at the earliest opportunity. In addition, a protocol was in place with the police to allow the exchange of information with the YOT police officer.
- ◇ The court team recommended adjournments for reports when it was felt necessary, to allow victims the opportunity to participate in the sentencing process. All relevant PSRs included victim impact statements to assist the court. The YOT had a format for preparing victim reports for both the court and referral panel, and both were subject to the YOT's quality assurance process before being presented.
- ◇ The YOT had a designated Victim Liaison Officer responsible for contacting all identified victims and offering them the opportunity to participate in restorative processes. A recognised assessment framework was used to assess their expectations, plan interventions

and ensure that they were dealt with sensitively to minimise dissatisfaction and possible feelings of being re-victimised. All victim work adhered to national standards and took into consideration the YJB Effective Practice Guidelines and the Data Protection Act 1984.

- ◆ All identified victims were contacted and offered the opportunity to attend referral panel meetings and to be involved in the restorative justice process. The case file analysis confirmed that 91% of victims were invited to participate in the panel meeting and, of those, 38% attended.
- ◆ The YOT had a wide range of interventions available, including letters of apology, direct mediation, direct reparation and attendance at referral order panels and restorative justice conferencing. All reparation placements were subject to a full risk assessment. Services were available in English and Welsh, and interpreters could be provided for other languages.
- ◆ A trained and experienced pool of volunteers, some of whom were used as referral panel members, had been established and were active in the recruitment and training of new members.
- ◆ Sessional staff had been recruited and trained to deliver victim awareness and empathy sessions aimed at raising a children and young people's awareness of the impact of crime.
- ◆ Restorative outcomes were measured using recidivism statistics, evaluation forms completed by children and young people, and information received from review and progress meetings. Victim satisfaction questionnaires were sent out to all victims following their involvement in the restorative justice process and recorded on Care Works.
- ◆ A steering group involving panel members and strategic and operational staff from the YOTs across North Wales had been set up to inform best practice and promote consistency in service delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The YOT had identified several areas for improvement in the self-assessment it completed as part of the inspection. These included evaluation and raising staff awareness on victim issues. These issues were being addressed.
- ◆ Victim details were known in only 50% of final warning cases, and less than half were invited to participate in the process. This issue needed to be addressed by both the YOT and the police.

**Good
practice**

One local high school had very serious concerns regarding damage caused to its premises outside of school hours and particularly during school holidays. As a consequence discussions took place with the YOT and a decision was made for the YOT and the school to work in partnership to try and tackle the problem.

The project considered the school to be the victim and the various children and young people concerned were identified. Programmes were introduced to educate the children and young people of the costs involved and the possible consequences of their actions for the school and its pupils. In addition they were involved in reparation activities to the school.

The project was successful and had a significant impact. Damage to the school was reduced considerably and the children and young people's behaviour was modified. Due to its success, consideration was being given to its expansion to other schools in the county.

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH VICTIMS AND
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

This section is judged as good.

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
 - 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 Flintshire YOT 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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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