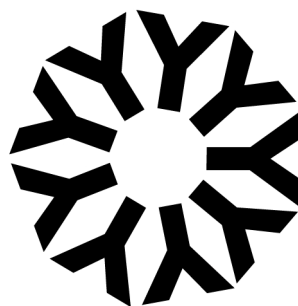


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Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:
Gateshead
Youth Offending Team

2006

Foreword

The inspection of the Gateshead Youth Offending Team took place during phase three of the youth offending team inspection programme. The Youth Crime Management Board was providing strong leadership in support of delivery of services for children and young people who had offended. Its approach sought to inform and enhance a wide range of Children's Services and the inclusion of a Vice Chair independent of YOT activity was a welcome development.

The Youth Offending Team, which had restructured in 2005, was well resourced by the local authority and partners, and it was positioned to deliver good quality services. There was a strong management team with a clear vision for future activity and a number of team leaders with responsibility for day-to-day service delivery. Although work with children and young people was of a good standard, the quality of assessments and management of risk of harm required some development to ensure that relevant links were made across assessment and intervention.

We were impressed by the quality of the education support provided and work in the courts was good. Preventative interventions were also of a good standard and it was clear that energy had been devoted to the various strands of this activity. Children and young people in custody were well supported and high levels of work were being channelled into the provision of education and accommodation post-custody. Direct engagement with the victims of crime required attention to develop this area of activity to a good standard.

The Gateshead Youth Offending Team was positioned to meet the challenges of the future youth justice agenda and enact the recommendations set out in this inspection report.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

August 2006

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in April and May 2006.

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	3
Glossary	4
Introduction	5
Overview of the area	6
Scoring summary	7
Diversity issues	8
Key statistics	9
Key findings	10
1. MANAGEMENT	14
2. WORK IN THE COURTS	21
3. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY	26
4. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DTOs	38
5. VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	42
The joint inspection of YOTs	44
Inspection arrangements	45
Code of practice	46
Scoring approach	47
Next steps	48
Inspection criteria for YOTs in England	49

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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
DTO	Detention and Training Order
E2E	Education to Employment
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
HMI Prisons	HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
ISP	Initial Supervision Plan
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
IT	Information Technology
JAR	Joint Area Review
MAPP	Multi-Agency Public Protection
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
NECA	North East Council for Addiction
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
Onset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
PLUS	Problem Solving Learning Usable Skills
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act
PCEP	Professional Certificate in Effective Practice
POPOS	Prolific and Other Priority Offenders Strategy
PSR	Pre-sentence Report
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
SSR	Specific Sentence Report
WPI	Wales Programme for Improvement
YIP	Youth Inclusion Programme
YISP	Youth Inclusion Support Panel
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOIS	Youth Offending Information System
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 Metropolitan District of Gateshead is located in the county of Tyne and Wear in the North East of England.
- ◆ Gateshead had a total population of 191,151, measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 21.9% were aged 0-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was close to the average for England, which was 22.7%.
- ◆ Gateshead had a predominantly white population, 98.4%, and this was much higher than the average for England of 90.9%. The percentage of Asian or Asian British residents, 0.7%, was significantly lower than the average for England of 4.6%. The percentage of Black or Black British residents, at 0.2%, was also lower than the English average of 2.3%.
- ◆ The level of employment in Gateshead, 54.7%, was lower than the average for England of 60.9%, while the level of unemployment, 4.0%, was correspondingly higher than the average for England of 3.4%.
- ◆ There was a lower percentage of students resident in Gateshead at the time of the census, both economically active and inactive, at 5.7% compared to 7.3% in England. There was a much higher percentage of permanently sick or disabled residents, 9.8% compared to 5.3% in England.
- ◆ Gateshead Council was classified as excellent in the Audit Commission's CPA 2004.
- ◆ The YJB figures for youth offending for the period April 2004 to March 2005 show that 62.5 offences were committed per 1000 children and young people aged 0-17 years in Gateshead.
- ◆ The YJB summary of YOT performance against the key performance indicators for April-December 2005 awarded Gateshead YOT a performance level of 4.

Scoring summary

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

	Section score
Management	4
Work in the courts	3
Work with children and young people in the community	2
Work with children and young people subject to DTOs	3
Victims and restorative justice	2
Overall assessment	

The Gateshead Youth Crime Management Board provided strong and inclusive direction to the YOT, which was located in the Learning and Children Directorate. As Chair, the Director of Children's Services, together with her Deputy and the Director of Children and Young People, ensured that Board members were focused on the range of needs of children and young people. The representation, attendance and contribution of members were good.

The local authority, together with partners, had provided strong support to the YOT in relation to resources and a review of staffing had recently been conducted. This had been effectively led by the Head of Service and operational managers, although some of the changes had yet to be fully embed within the team. Standards of supervision, appraisal and training were good.

Levels of engagement with children and young people were strong, although the quality of initial assessments and the management of risk of harm required attention. Services in relation to children and young people at risk of offending were well developed, with five YISPs across the borough and YIPs providing focused interventions in two areas.

Court staff and the bail support team, ensured that relationships with the Gateshead Youth Court were strong and that high levels of support were provided to children, young people and families involved in the criminal justice system. Work with children and young people in custody was supported through strong assessment and training plans. Work with victims was adequate, although staff were not fully involved in systems designed to develop this work.

Diversity issues

The population of Gateshead was predominantly white at 98.4%, some way above the national average of 90.9%. There was a significant Jewish community in the borough and YOT staff had received presentations from both Jewish and Asian representatives to develop understanding of these communities.

Ethnic representation within both the Youth Crime Management Board and the YOT was white, but the Board was well linked to other strategic forums and links to the Jewish community, via the Children's Fund representative, were well developed. The Race Equality Plan had identified the need to focus on recruitment issues in relation to the ethnicity of the staff group.

Although staff had received diversity training provided by the local authority they had not been provided with training specific to their work with children and young people, and volunteers had not received diversity training sufficient to meet their needs. Many members of the staff group presented as being strongly aware of the potential diverse needs of children and young people as offenders and victims, but were not consistently equipped to work with and challenge levels of behaviour presented by children and young people. For example, the religious faith of children, young people and families was not routinely identified during assessment and racist attitudes evident in some offences were not always appropriately challenged.

The Race Equality Audit had identified actions to develop the support made available to children and young people from black or minority ethnic and faith groups as victims of youth crime. We were pleased to note that incidents of domestic violence perpetrated by or against children and young people were now the subject of guidance and formed part of the assessment and planning process.

Children and young people involved in the YIP and YISP preventative work were white and we were unable to ascertain the numbers of children and young people from black or minority ethnic communities at risk of offending. This had not been fully considered at an operational level.

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	94%	84%	70-97%	100%
– adequate quality	42%	71%	29-93%	
Full risk of harm to others completed on relevant cases	57%	54%	17-83%	
Evidence of management oversight in risk of harm cases	50%	41%	0-100%	
ISP meets the content requirements of national standards and contains SMART objectives	25%	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	74%	75%	52-100%	
Judgements about acceptability/unacceptability of absences are appropriate	78%	71%	40-96%	
Breach/recall action has taken place, if required, within the national standards timescale	91%	49%	13-100%	
Evidence of any criminal activity during the course of the order	39%	29%	15-48%	
Appropriate action has been taken if a child or young person is considered vulnerable to harm from self and others	83%	95%	67-100%	
Effective action is taken where there is evidence of educational difficulties	93%	60%	33-81%	90% ⁽³⁾
Appropriate referrals are made in cases of:				
– physical health	100%	n/a	n/a	
– mental/emotional health	50%	n/a	n/a	100% ⁽⁴⁾
– substance misuse	65%	n/a	n/a	100% ⁽⁵⁾
Victim was consulted about restorative/reparative justice work with child or young person	57%	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** – The Youth Crime Management Board was well led, appropriately constituted and provided an inclusive focus on the strategic management of the YOT. Attendance and representation was good and the Director of Children’s Services, as Chair, was supported by a Deputy who was independent of YOT activity. Aspects of YOT performance were considered by the Board and presentations had been given in relation to Children’s and Young People’s Planning and the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, which helped provide the Board with an holistic and considered approach to the needs of children and young people. The Head of Service was well linked to the Learning and Children Directorate.
- ◆ **Work in the courts** – The YOT was involved in the Youth Court User Group and was highly regarded by court representatives. The bail support team provided a range of appropriate packages and staff from the court team were highly visible, providing a link between case management and court activity, and support to children, young people and families. Reports were of adequate quality but required some development.
- ◆ **Work with children and young people in the community** – Although initial assessments were prepared within national standards timescales, further work was required to improve quality. Assessments did not consistently include the range of factors relevant to children and young people and they were not appropriately linked to the management of risk of harm. Assessment surgeries had recently been introduced and operational managers were currently working on updated assessment and risk management policies.

Specialists provided a range of interventions and there were a number of programmes available for use by case managers. In particular, levels of education support were strong and deficits in relation to the provision of accommodation were being addressed. However, service level agreements were not always in place to support these arrangements.

Prevention services were well developed with two YIPs and a borough-wide YISP providing a range of interventions and support to those at risk of offending. This work was supported by a strategy designed to reduce anti-social behaviour through the provision of relevant interventions.
- ◆ **Work with children and young people subject to DTOs** – Custody assessments and training plans were effectively prepared and reviews consistently attended by specialist staff. Case managers were highly motivated to provide consistent levels of liaison with children and young people in custody, and education and training needs were suitably addressed during periods of custody and on

release. Accommodation options were limited but in a number of cases family relationships were a focal point and had been re-established in order to provide resettlement options.

- ◇ ***Victims and restorative justice*** – Restorative work to involve victims with children and young people required development. Large numbers of victims were provided with advice and support, and surrogate victims had been used effectively in the referral order process. Although there were examples of direct restorative justice within prevention work and indirect work with community penalties, there was limited direct restorative delivery in final warning and first tier processes. A victim working party had been established to develop this area of work, but there was limited case manager involvement and the group had, to date, been unable to make a significant impact.

Recommendations

The Chair of the Youth Crime 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
- ◆ consideration is given to representation at management board level of the Learning and Skills Council
- ◆ mechanisms at management board level are available to consider the views of families engaged with the YOT and are used to develop service delivery.

The Head of Service should ensure that:

- ◆ comprehensive risk of harm training is provided to staff and managers supported by appropriate policies and procedures
- ◆ the quality of initial assessments across the range of orders is developed to ensure that all factors are satisfactorily considered and that work in relation to the staff surgery is continued
- ◆ team leaders continue to be provided with training and development opportunities to enable them to effectively manage and support consistent service delivery and allow operational managers to coordinate, develop and implement strategy
- ◆ ongoing work between the YOT Head of Service and colleagues from the Children and Families management team continues to be developed, including joint working and communication arrangements, supported by the Local Safeguarding Children Board where appropriate
- ◆ the development of staff training plans includes full consideration of opportunities available to part-time staff and across different age ranges
- ◆ further diversity training to inform developing staff and volunteer needs is delivered
- ◆ the victim working group is fully supported so that case managers are fully engaged in victim processes and that work with victims is prioritised
- ◆ programmes and interventions used by staff are fully evaluated to assist with future service delivery
- ◆ protocols and service level agreements are reviewed and updated where necessary, for example in relation to accommodation provision, ISSP/bail support teams and education provision
- ◆ a review is conducted of PSRs to provide a consistent approach to their preparation.

Partner organisations should ensure that:

- ◆ they work together with YOT to review and update protocols and service level agreements.

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.*

The Youth Crime Management Board provided strategic governance to the YOT. The Board had been established in 2005 from the original steering group, with an emphasis to support the needs of all children and young people likely to be affected by crime. Its position within the Learning and Children Directorate facilitated strong cross-cutting strategic links. The Head of Service reported to the Director of Children and Young People.

Strengths:

- ◆ The Youth Crime Management Board was formed in July 2005 as a result of a general review of service delivery. It had been recognised by Board members that the responsibility for YOT strategic action should be placed within a Children's Services grouping in order to position the team for future activity.
- ◆ The Board was chaired effectively by the Director of Children's Services and its terms of reference had recently been reviewed. Youth crime issues in general were considered to be an essential part of strategic activity and a cross-cutting style of operation had been adopted. The Chair illustrated a strong understanding of priority areas in relation to work with children and young people in general and specifically with those who had offended.
- ◆ The Children's Fund manager was Vice Chair of the Board. He was able to offer different perspectives on the impact of YOT activity and provided links to the Board through his effective contacts with representatives of the Jewish community.
- ◆ During the inspection we observed a Board meeting and were impressed to find that a wide range of strategic activity was considered. There was a strong sense that members were able to explore various aspects of service delivery and search for links across the children's agenda. Presentations were made to the Board in relation to both operational and strategic matters, and clear action points were identified to members in order to develop work.
- ◆ In April 2005 the YOT manager had been appointed Head of Service and this new strategic positioning meant that he was able to directly

engage with a number of heads of service within the Learning and Children Directorate. He was well respected by partners and was line managed by the Director of Children and Young People. He was a member of a number of strategic forums including the Community Safety Partnership, Children and Young People's Partnership and the Children's Fund. He also played a lead role in the development of prevention services as Chair of both the AMBER project and the Family Group Conferencing steering groups.

- ◆ The Head of Service represented the YOT on the Local Safeguarding Children Board and operational managers were involved in the work of a number of sub-groups.
- ◆ The positioning of the Board had facilitated stronger strategic links between the YOT and education services and the Board had recently received a presentation from the Head of Employment, Training and Education on key issues and priorities.
- ◆ Participation and attendance of members was good, although some members did not have a strong understanding of YOT performance issues.
- ◆ The Board was accountable to the Chief Executive and had responsibility to ensure that the youth justice plan was implemented. Due to the recent high performance of the local authority the YOT had been exempt from submitting a youth justice plan for 2004/2005. However, the YOT Service Plan 2005/2008 provided a comprehensive overview of activity and the Board was planning to meet to agree and deliver the next youth justice plan.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The Learning and Skills Council were not represented on the Youth Crime Management Board.
- ◆ Performance monitoring in relation to the wide range of preventative services on offer was not yet fully embedded at an operational level, although it was considered at management board level.
- ◆ Although views and representations were taken from service users across Children's Services in general, specific mechanisms to consider the views of families with whom the YOT were engaged were not fully developed within the Youth Crime Management Board.

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 well resourced and supported by the local authority. It was located in premises that provided sufficient operational capacity. Following a recent review of its structure, in 2005, services were delivered by three teams: courts and community, restorative justice and partnerships, and prevention.

Strengths:

- ◆ The YOT was well supported by the local authority who had ensured that the team consisted of a wide range of staff and that partners had made appropriate secondments in accordance with legislation, for example in relation to health and education responsibilities and police secondees. The YOT staffing structure review and subsequent changes had been fully supported by the local authority and were designed to develop corporacy and provide more effective leadership in the management of children and young people.
- ◆ Each service team had a dedicated operational manager working together with two team leaders, a role which had recently been introduced. The structure was likely to provide more effective operational management although it was too early to assess impact.
- ◆ Arrangements in relation to the referral of children and young people to MAPP were good. The Head of Service was linked to the MAPPA strategy group and arrangements were supported by regular meetings between the Assistant Chief Probation Officer and the Operational Manager from the YOT courts and community team. We were informed by the Assistant Chief Probation Officer that recent referrals, although few, had been appropriate and well managed and that MAPP guidance had been provided to managers in the YOT.
- ◆ There were three young offender officers with a range of generic responsibilities. These posts had been created from existing staff and provided flexibility for managers in relation to the delivery of interventions and programmes, including the 'STOP' and 'Plus' programmes and 'Bin the Knife'. They were involved in the pilot 'change and control' programme, which specifically addressed offences of a violent and sexual nature, and one young offender officer was available to provide support to staff and children and young people resident in local family group homes.
- ◆ The final warning team consisted of two police officers and victim support staff. There were three case managers who were engaged with all final warning and referral order cases. The police officers worked together with two victim liaison officers, who were dedicated to the collection of feedback from victims of crime in relation to PSRs, final warnings and referral orders.
- ◆ Administration staff provided effective support and we were impressed to find examples of innovative practices designed to provide case managers with less administrative responsibility and more time to engage with children and young people.

- ◆ A part-time member of staff provided mentoring to a small number of children and young people who were involved in 'prevent and deter' initiatives. She was able to offer one-to-one support to children and young people and families in addition to the supervision provided by case managers.
- ◆ The 'Stop, Think, Act and Reflect' programme, otherwise known as STAR, was delivered by case managers to children and young people on a one-to-one basis and provided up to 15 cognitive behavioural sessions designed to address self management and problem-solving skills.
- ◆ The YOT Accommodation Officer had been in post for 18 months and was involved in a number of initiatives to develop accommodation provision. This included dialogue with Byker Bridge accommodation providers to explore tenancy support options to vulnerable children and young people and the development of an independent 'living skills' package. The aim was to address all accommodation issues based on an Asset score of two or more by April 2006. This was ongoing work supported by a business plan that included reviews of objectives and training.
- ◆ The Reparation Coordinator, together with a support worker, provided 12 half-day reparation sessions to children and young people focusing on basic skills and the provision of constructive reparation to the community. There was an emphasis on visible rehabilitation to specific localities in order to address fear of crime and attitudes to children and young people. The coordination of activities included information sharing within individual projects and evidence of a quality feedback loop between staff, case managers and referral order panels. Children and young people considered to be vulnerable were provided with one-to-one delivery.
- ◆ The Senior Education Welfare Officer, who was seconded in a full-time capacity, led an education team that included a Connexions personal advisor and a support worker funded from 'Keeping Young People Engaged'.
- ◆ There were two members of staff dedicated to health issues: a substance misuse worker and a mental health worker. Formal service level agreements were in place, but were in need of review. Arrangements for professional development were good.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ It was unclear whether arrangements to engage staff in relation to future youth justice plans were adequate, so that their views would be fully represented.
- ◆ Levels of awareness amongst the staff group in relation to risk and MAPP arrangements were mixed, although both the operational manager and a team leader from the courts and community team had strong case management backgrounds and demonstrated vision in relation to the future application of risk management.

- ◆ Protocols and service level agreements required general review.
- ◆ There was a lack of clear processes in relation to the provision of 'crisis' accommodation for children and young people, which was acute in relation to community penalty and bail support situations.
- ◆ Although programme delivery was monitored and feedback taken from children and young people, there was limited evidence that this was linked to information management in a way designed to inform future planning and reductions in reoffending amongst children and young people.

1.3 Staff supervision, development and training

Key judgement:

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

There was a strong staff appraisal system in place, and training and developmental needs were usually identified and addressed. Supervision was under-pinned by regular team meetings.

Strengths:

- ◆ All staff had received regular and effective supervision and had a current achievement and development plan in place. Most spoke of timely performance reviews, which were linked to overall organisational objectives although a small number stated that their goals were not appropriately linked to achievement and development plans.
- ◆ The view of the staff group was that the Head of Service and the operational management team were easily accessible and had adopted an open door policy.
- ◆ There was an effective policy in place to ensure that newly appointed members of staff were provided with appropriate levels of induction. Staff who had recently joined the YOT expressed satisfaction at the levels of support provided.
- ◆ Weekly meetings were held where cases were allocated to case managers. This structure was supported by a system of Team Review Meetings, held quarterly and chaired by the Operational Manager or a team leader from the courts and community team. The meetings were designed to check and review the management of risk and supervision planning and were attended by staff and key partners likely to add value to the management of children and young people. They were described as: *"an excellent way of sharing information about interventions and their effectiveness, which can help to challenge thinking and brings cases to life and makes them human"*.

- ◆ The Operational Manager and a team leader from the courts and community team had identified opportunities to further develop the quality of assessment, supervision and interventions and a staff surgery had been established since March 2006.
- ◆ An operational manager from the YOT was a member of the Prevention Strategy Group for Gateshead and provided effective leadership and direction to the YIP and YISP teams. Each of these teams was supervised by a team leader, and levels of supervision and appraisal within these teams were strong.
- ◆ The Senior Education Welfare Officer, Connexions Personal Advisor and health staff were integral to the team and had good links with their parent organisations. They attended weekly allocation meetings and had access to both YOT supervision and professional development opportunities. The probation secondee was appropriately linked to probation area training and was kept well informed about professional development opportunities.
- ◆ We were satisfied that up-to-date CRB checks had been conducted in respect of all members of staff and that child protection training was regularly updated.
- ◆ We were able to speak to a focus group of referral order volunteers, all of whom were highly motivated. They had received continuous and updated training and had attended team-building events.
- ◆ In order to develop systems to assist in the identification of children and young people affected by or involved in the perpetration of domestic violence, practice guidance had recently been introduced to inform risk management processes. A glossary of all programmes and interventions available for use was also accessible to provide guidance for practitioners.
- ◆ A number of members of staff had attended, or were in receipt, of YJB PCEP training. Two members of staff were currently involved in further education opportunities. There were arrangements in place with partners to manage disciplinary and grievance issues.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Service restructuring, staff absences and increases in the numbers of community orders had resulted in an increase in workload levels, particularly in the restorative justice and partnerships team. This had impacted on morale and service delivery. Team leaders were not yet fully embedded across the service and were at different stages of professional development.
- ◆ Although staff training had been delivered in relation to the management of risk of harm, it had not yet been disseminated to all those involved in service delivery and team leaders, so to provide as full an understanding of this area of work as possible. Risk management work was not supported by a specific policy.

- ◇ All staff had received diversity training provided by the local authority. However, this was not specific to work with children and young people as offenders who presented with racially motivated offences or attitudes. The lack of a common strategy meant that staff were unable to consistently address the wide range of diverse issues presented by children and young people. Referral order volunteers had not been provided with diversity training sufficient to meet their developing need.
- ◇ There were deficits, perceived or otherwise, in the provision of training opportunities for part-time staff and across different age ranges.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT

This section is judged as excellent.

2.

WORK IN THE COURTS

Key judgement:

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

The Gateshead Youth Court, which sat twice each week, was provided with a consistent service from a dedicated YOT court team, which was supervised by a team leader.

Strengths:

- ◆ There were strong working relationships between the YOT and the Youth Court, which were represented at management board level by the Clerk to the Justices. This facilitated strong strategic links and, supported by a written agreement, allowed the Court to participate, where appropriate, in the agenda for children and young people. The Chair of the Youth Court Bench was highly complimentary of the activity of the YOT in court.
- ◆ The YOT was represented at the Youth Court User Group by a team leader from the courts and community team.

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◆ The YOT court team consisted of full- and part-time staff supported by a Youth Support Worker and provided an effective service to the Gateshead Youth Court. The court officers supplied the Court with a range of advice in relation to sentencing history and enforcement issues, and were able to update relevant information into YOIS from a court-based IT facility.
- ◆ The role of the Youth Support Worker was dedicated to ensuring that children and young people were supported following their appearance in court. He had a clear interest in the welfare of children and young people and ensured that all were seen personally post-court and provided with a case manager appointment during the same week. In all the cases we reviewed, the child or young person had been interviewed immediately following their appearance at court and in almost all cases first appointments took place within one working day.

- ◆ Training had been provided to magistrates that included case study work, and YOT court staff, together with other relevant professionals, had been involved in mock court procedures to develop the effectiveness of breach proceedings.
- ◆ YOT court staff attended weekly allocation meetings in order to maintain their professional knowledge of ongoing case management issues. They were regularly provided with personal feedback in relation to performance by the Head of Service.
- ◆ In all the custody cases we reviewed, aspects of vulnerability were assessed and forwarded to the establishment within the national standards timescales. However, none of the other cases we reviewed featured sentences to custody.

Good practice

The Youth Support Worker was a well-known figure in the Youth Court. He had established an effective system to engage with children and young people and provided support to them and families, where appropriate, in relation to a range of post-court assistance. One of his priorities was to engage children and young people in relation to educational needs, a positive consequence of which had been a number of referrals, via the YOT, to Basic Skills for Life courses provided at local colleges.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ Case managers were infrequently seen in court and there was a risk of the staff group becoming de-skilled in relation to court procedures.

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.*

The YOT court and bail support teams were described by court practitioners as “*keen and interested*” and provided a “*comprehensive and thorough*” service. The work of these teams ensured that children and young people were provided with a responsive service and that their needs were addressed where necessary.

Strengths:

- ◆ There were two full-time bail support officers working to a remand management strategy. This included appropriate systems to ensure that children and young people at risk of custody were identified at the earliest opportunity. Appropriate bail assessments were then conducted, together with effective liaison with parents/carers and the crown prosecution services.

- ◆ Optional bail support packages were offered to children and young people at risk of remand to custody, which included education opportunities, mentoring and transport. We were informed by the Youth Court that bail support packages were comprehensive and reduced the likelihood of a child or young person being remanded or sentenced to custody.
- ◆ General information was routinely provided to children and young people whilst on bail and, although our file read suggested that improvements could be made, the bail support team were confident that their best efforts went into maintaining contact in accordance with national standards.
- ◆ In all the cases we reviewed, the range of services available were sufficient to present the Youth Court with a suitable alternative to custody and, on the occasion where an additional package had been prepared following a remand to custody, bail had been granted.
- ◆ Bail support staff worked closely together with the ISSP team in order to provide programmes of suitable intensity to support children and young people at serious risk of custody. However, there was no protocol in place to ensure that the quality of relationships and provision could be sustained.
- ◆ Home visits were made during periods of bail support in almost all cases reviewed.
- ◆ Arrangements were in place with social services to provide court cover over weekend and bank holiday periods.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ There was limited availability of suitable accommodation within the area and as a consequence children and young people were likely to be located outside of the borough.
- ◆ Although assessments were prepared effectively using the bail Asset tool, the ability of staff to satisfactorily identify and manage risk of harm issues was limited. Links to any previous risk assessments were inadequate and risk training had not been provided to the bail support team. There were inconsistencies in relation to the success of bail support packages in ensuring that the child or young person was prevented from reoffending or protected from any risk to themselves or others.

Key judgement:

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

A gate-keeping system was in place, which was supervised by the Operational Manager or a team leader from the courts and community

team, and an annual quality assurance audit was undertaken involving court clerks and magistrates.

Strengths:

- ◆ Overall we found that PSRs were well balanced and that all options potentially available to the Court were presented. In most cases the child or young person and parents/carers had been interviewed on at least one occasion in order to inform the reports and in 85% of cases they were completed within the national standard timescale.
- ◆ It was clear that the Youth Court attached significant weight to PSRs, which they considered to be of high quality. Our review found that they contained clear proposals, commensurate with the nature of the offence, in 79% of cases and that the sentence corresponded with proposals in 70% of cases.
- ◆ In all cases, reports were free from discriminatory and stereotypical language and there was sufficient distinction made between risk of offending and risk of harm.
- ◆ In more than half of the cases reviewed, the report contained an analysis of the offence, although in a limited number of cases they were more descriptive of the offending.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Where children and young people were unable to attend for initial assessment there were occasions where the information presented to the Court was not up to date.
- ◆ PSRs were unlikely to be understood by children and young people on all occasions and an assessment of their ability to appreciate the seriousness and consequences of offending and maturity to carry out the proposed sentence was not always included.
- ◆ Risk of harm issues were not linked to assessments or fully explored by authors with some confusion as to how risk should be presented. Rather than associating reports to risk of harm assessments there was some reference to the concept of 'dangerousness' in relation to children and young people that was unhelpful to the overall process.
- ◆ In two thirds of the cases reviewed, victim information was not adequately addressed.
- ◆ Reports were often lengthy due to the inclusion of unnecessary information.
- ◆ Safeguarding issues were generally well addressed, although in one case contact with social services was limited. In general, work relating to safeguarding needed to be evidenced and illustrated.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK IN THE COURTS

This section is judged as good.

3. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

3.1 Work with children and young people at risk of offending

Key judgement:

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

Strategic direction in relation to prevention services was provided by the Children's Trust via the Prevention Strategy Group, which was chaired by the Children's Fund representative to the Youth Crime Management Board and attended by the YOT operational manager with responsibility for the coordination of services. There were a number of dedicated teams, a YISP and two YIPs, each with a team leader and administration support, and prevention services were linked to the anti-social behaviour agenda. The YOT Head of Service was Chair of the Targeted Youth Support Pathfinder.

Strengths:

- ◇ There were five YISPs across the borough, generally known as the AMBER project and formed in 2004/2005, which provided a central role in developing broad-based interventions and prevention services via the Children's Trust. Panels were chaired by the YISP manager based within the YOT and provided a range of services designed to support children and young people considered to be at risk of offending, including those involved in high-risk reprimand cases. Referrals were made from a variety of agencies.
- ◇ We reviewed a small number of YISP cases and found that the Onset assessment tool was being used to conduct initial assessments. Subsequent youth inclusion support plans were generally clear and focused with interventions relating to key areas identified in Onset. Reviews were considered to be an essential element of the engagement process, which included parents/carers.
- ◇ In one case a parent/carer had been referred to the Sungate parenting service and had attended a number of parenting group sessions. Their child had been placed on the 'just like' support package and provided with a number of one-to-one offending behaviour sessions and holiday activities. A Family Group Conference had been arranged as part of an exit strategy and feedback from the parent/carer was positive. She stated that YOT involvement in her family had been very helpful and it was clear that significant assistance had been given by YOT staff.

- ◆ There were strong links between the YOT and the Sungate parenting service. A significant number of referrals of parents/carers had been made.
- ◆ Family Group Conferences were being piloted until 2007 and were a key feature of the YOT's preventative work. They were used to inform intervention plans, as a means to resolve issues affecting families and as part of exit strategies. Where appropriate people affected by anti-social behaviour were involved in the conferences. We met the participants of one conference where as a result of which incidents of anti-social behaviour had stopped. The victims expressed satisfaction with the resolution and the work of YISP staff, who were continuing to engage with the family and provide educational and anger management support to the young person involved.
- ◆ There were two YIPs: Futures Plus which provided targeted support in the Springwell area of Gateshead (for children and young people aged 13-16 years) and Respect Birtley which was strategically linked to the Targeted Youth Support Pathfinder (for children and young people aged 10-16 years). Each project engaged up to 50 children and young people considered at risk of offending in a variety of activities and referrals were made from a multi-agency meeting.
- ◆ YIP steering groups were held twice yearly where referrals were made on a 'high, medium and low' needs assessment. Due to some inflexibility in this system it was likely that opportunities for referrals would soon be made on a quarterly basis to facilitate a more dynamic approach to the inclusion of children and young people considered most at need of support.
- ◆ As part of the Respect Birtley YIP, strong links had been formed with local schools. For example, we visited one school where YIP staff had become a discreet part of school life, an aspect of which was the opportunity to visit lunchtime drop-in clubs to engage with children and young people involved in the YIP. Arrangements were also in place to provide additional in-school support. We saw one session where the Teen Talk package was used to provide personal safety advice. Feedback from the young person involved was positive and she stated that as a result of a number of months of work with YIP staff she had increased levels of self-confidence around her own personal safety and future vocational prospects.
- ◆ As part of the Futures Plus YIP, a number of girls and young women had been engaged in dance projects held at Leam Lane Community Centre. Attendance had increased over a period of time and staff from NECA worked closely with YIP staff to provide support and advice in relation to substance misuse issues.
- ◆ We met with an enthusiastic group of people involved in the strategic delivery of interventions designed to manage children and young people involved in anti-social behaviour. An anti-social behaviour forum had recently been established which included the Anti-Social

Behaviour Coordinator, housing, police, education and the Crown Prosecution Service.

- ◇ The STOP programme had been developed by the YOT to provide interventions for children and young people involved in anti-social behaviour but not otherwise engaged with the YOT. The programme provided up to six one-hour sessions for 13-16 year olds.
- ◇ There were a number of acceptable behaviour agreements in place that had contributed to the overall strategic management of anti-social behaviour orders. Parenting contracts were also considered where necessary.
- ◇ The YIP and YISP teams comprised of staff that were clearly committed and enthusiastic. Each team had administration support and it was encouraging to note that these members of staff were provided with developmental opportunities to work with children and young people where appropriate. It was anticipated that in the near future YIP staff would take on roles more akin to case managers together with more sophisticated methods of assessment, planning and supervision.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ Opportunities to provide children and young people with mentors were limited.
- ◇ The YISP team was unable to collate and use performance management information due to the lack of an IT solution.
- ◇ Attendance at YISP meetings by professionals was inconsistent across the borough. The awareness of some panel members of the opportunities presented by the programme varied. Panel membership was currently being reviewed to ensure consistency across the borough.
- ◇ In view of the anticipated case management approach to prevention cases, arrangements for staff training, development opportunities and support needed to be fully considered.
- ◇ There was no strategy in place to ensure that children and young people from a black or minority ethnic background at risk of offending could be referred to YISP opportunities.
- ◇ Arrangements needed to be reviewed to ensure that appropriate attention is given to safeguarding children and young people engaged in preventative activity.

3.2

Work with children and young people who have offended

Key judgement:

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

The YOT was located in premises leased from the police authority. This offered suitable accommodation for the various parts of the team. There were three distinct areas of service delivery: courts and community, restorative justice and partnerships, and prevention, each with an operational manager and two team leaders.

Strengths:

- ◆ Initial assessments were conducted in accordance with the national standard for timelines in 94% of cases and in almost all cases children and young people were involved in the assessment. In 81% of cases where the child or young person was under the age of 16 parents/carers were involved in assessments.
- ◆ Steps were taken to ensure that children and young people fully understood the requirements of the order and supervision in almost all cases. There was a close fit between interventions and the assessed risk of harm in 60% of cases. The *What do you think?* tool was used in 45% of cases.
- ◆ In relation to the management of risk of harm we found that a full risk assessment was conducted in 57% of cases where risk was identified as an issue. Where this was done resources allocated to the child or young person were commensurate with the risk in most cases and in all cases diversity issues were given appropriate consideration. The Operational Manager and a team leader from the courts and community team demonstrated a strong understanding of risk management, but there was no specific risk policy in place and there was a lack of clear direction and awareness amongst other team leaders and case managers.
- ◆ Home visits were conducted in accordance with national standard timescales in over half of all cases reviewed, and where staff were unable to achieve visits, reasons for this were evidenced in 71% of cases.
- ◆ The ISSP team, which was part of a regional consortium, had worked closely with the courts to offer viable alternatives to custody. It was able to provide a range of constructive activities although there were deficits in relation to education provision.
- ◆ Referral order contracts were delivered in accordance with requirements in 83% of cases and attention was paid to specific issues in 75% of cases. None of the contracts had ended prematurely.
- ◆ Reparation was well coordinated and there were a variety of options to which children and young people could be referred. Although direct

reparation work was limited, there were good examples of matching between offence type and reparation activity.

- ◆ Final warnings were conducted by staff from the restorative justice and partnerships team. In 57% of cases, final warning assessments were conducted within ten working days of notification by the police and were delivered within the national standard timescale, together with an appropriate intervention, in 90% of cases. Children and young people up to the age of 13 in receipt of a warning, and occasional high-risk reprimand cases, were referred to the AMBER project.
- ◆ In 74% of cases reviewed, the frequency of appointments arranged conformed to the national standard. Breach or recall action was taken in 91% of cases and appointments kept were within the national standard in 68% of cases. Where initial appointments were not kept there were indications that this was a factor in the future likelihood of breach.
- ◆ Case managers were able to demonstrate effective liaison with partners in 89% of cases and were able to motivate children and young people by reinforcing this work in almost all cases.
- ◆ In 61% of cases there was no evidence of further criminal activity by the child or young person during the order and reviews of Asset scores indicated an improvement in 43% of cases. Thinking and behaviour and attitudes to offending had been addressed in a number of cases with associated improvements in later assessments reflecting this work. Children and young people were compliant with the conditions of orders in 61% of cases.
- ◆ Seconded police staff provided intelligence to the 'prevent and deter' strand of POPOS and were involved in the gathering and dissemination of information from ISSP cases and aspects of prevention work.
- ◆ Comparative recidivism data collected from 2002 and 2003 over a 24-month period suggested that there had been reductions in reoffending across the range of orders. In particular there was a 7.8% reduction and a 14.3% reduction in relation to first tier and community penalties respectively.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The quality of initial assessments required attention, having been prepared in line with the national standard in less than half of all cases. Information from significant others was not appropriately linked to assessments, which were often contradictory and not based on current or past offending behaviour, but on the presentation and self-identification of factors by children and young people.
- ◆ Initial consideration of risk issues at the assessment stage was limited and not appropriately reviewed. In half of all the cases inspected a full risk of harm assessment had not been prepared when

required. A number of cases considered to present a risk issue, or with clear associations to potential risk, had not been properly assessed as doing so or classified as 'low' rather than 'concern'. Where risk indicators were considered, they were often contradictory to assessment information and were not related to plans to protect vulnerable parties.

- ◆ In half of all reviews where risk aware or concern factors had been identified, the case was referred to a manager. Following referral, evidence of management oversight in these cases was inconsistent, in part due to the fact that there was potential for different managers or supervisors to oversee the case.
- ◆ The quality of supervision planning was adequate and it was clear that appropriate interventions were being conducted in most cases. In 79% of cases, plans were satisfactorily reviewed against objectives and there was evidence of structured sessions and effective liaison with key partners. However, work was not always clearly evidenced in relation to anger management and substance misuse, for example NECA provided valuable interventions although attendance by children and young people was not always fully enforced and feedback on progress was not evidenced.
- ◆ In only half of all referral orders reviewed, the panel sat within the required national standard timescale, although in those cases where this was not achieved panels were usually held as soon as possible thereafter. Although victims were invited to attend in a large number of cases none had done so.
- ◆ Relationships between the ISSP team and YOT staff were not supported by clear protocols, although this was currently being reviewed. Differences in the enforcement policy of children and young people on ISSP and those on community orders were being managed by the relevant operational manager.
- ◆ In relation to first tier offences and final warnings there was a lack of consistency in the identification and referral of risk, discussion and referrals to education and health specialists, and liaison with social services. Diversity issues were also not always addressed. However, we were pleased to note that the final warning protocol, due to be introduced in April 2006, was designed to improve clarity of assessment and review the management of risk in these cases. Referral order assessments did not link thinking and behaviour criminogenic factors to offending, and information in relation to ETE was limited.

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◆ There was joint health commissioning in place for some Children's Services, including the YOT, and there was an integrated approach to planning services for children and young people.
- ◆ Formal service level agreements in relation to the provision of mental health and substance misuse services were in place, although in need of review. Staff received appropriate support from both YOT supervisors and their parent organisations. The mental health specialist was well supported by the local CAMHS, who took a proactive approach to work with children and young people.
- ◆ Tier 3 substance misuse services were provided by YOT staff as part of the '24/7' provision. Tier 2 issues were referred to and conducted by NECA and supported by a service level agreement. We were told that relationships between NECA and the YOT were strong and that an evaluation system was being developed to provide analysis of outcomes.
- ◆ Following referral to specialists, a wide range of approaches to work with children and young people was adopted, including one-to-one work, group work and work with parents/carers. Where physical health needs were identified, appropriate referrals were made in all cases.
- ◆ In relation to emotional and mental health issues we found that appropriate referrals had been successfully made in half of all cases reviewed and that referrals in relation to substance misuse had been made in 65% of cases.
- ◆ Specialist mental health and substance misuse staff provided regular and relevant advice and training to colleagues and healthy living packages for use with children and young people, which included advice in relation to diet, smoking and general exercise.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The mental health specialist was a lone worker and although there had been relevant discussions concerning cover arrangements, no agreed plan was in place.
- ◆ Thresholds for referral to CAMHS were high, which presented difficulties in some cases. Mental health referrals were target driven and, although outcomes were followed up and evaluated, further work was required to ensure that referrals were brought to a conclusion satisfactory to the YOT.

- ◇ Where referrals were made to specialist mental health services we could not be sure that appropriate contact was made with children and young people during these interventions.
- ◇ Potential demand for referral to specialist sexual health services was high but there was no local provision. Tier 4 mental health cases, although small in number, could only be referred nationally, which presented potential delays in addressing need.
- ◇ Limited forensic services were available for the assessment of psychological needs and support, highlighted in one case where an early identification had been made but the referral process was incomplete.

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◇ In relation to Looked After Children there was appropriate involvement and consultation with social services colleagues in all the cases we reviewed.
- ◇ In order to further develop communication and joint working arrangements, there had been a series of meetings between YOT and social services managers. Actions to address these issues included YOT managers' attendance at operational Children and Families meetings, joint protocols, guidance and induction procedures and the development of a vulnerable young persons policy.
- ◇ Where there was evidence of liaison, there were some good examples of joint working between the YOT and social services and in one case this had resulted in shared case assessments, which had provided evidence of the need for a therapeutic foster placement that had then been provided.
- ◇ In relation to the seven custody cases which we reviewed four involved Looked After Children. We found that social services had been appropriately involved during supervision and where vulnerability was an issue, necessary action had been taken.
- ◇ Where children and young people were assessed as vulnerable to harm, appropriate action was taken in only 60% of cases.
- ◇ 'Staying safe plans' had recently been introduced into case management to enable staff to focus on additional aspects of a child or young person's vulnerability. Although plans were being implemented not all case managers were aware of their introduction and purpose.
- ◇ A need to deliver training to social services colleagues in relation to PACE requirements and children and young people had been

identified, but it was unclear if this initiative had been developed. Work was also being developed on protocols to reduce the likelihood of Looked After Children becoming unnecessarily involved in the criminal justice system.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Liaison between YOT and social services staff was not as clear in cases where children and young people were not Looked After, with evidence of appropriate liaison in only 36% of cases. Contacts and discussions between case managers and social services were not always recorded on YOIS, particularly in final warning cases. Where referrals in relation to vulnerability issues were made, arrangements for feedback from social services were inadequate which left YOT case managers uncertain as to any action taken.
- ◆ Appropriate protocols existed for children and young people subject to transitional leaving care and accommodation arrangements, but we could not be sure that they were sufficiently robust to provide suitable support.

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◆ Available data for the period April-December 2005 showed that 89% of children and young people with whom the YOT were engaged were in ETE at the end of orders. This was the result of improvements since 2001 and compared favourably against a national average of 75.1%.
- ◆ The Senior Education Welfare Officer was engaged in decision making via attendance at the 'Education Otherwise than at School' panel, where individual action plans were agreed, and at the Special Educational Needs panel. She was also able to access and use the Schools Information Management System, which enabled speedier access for monitoring purposes.
- ◆ As a result of up-to-date and comprehensive service level agreements with the Access and Inclusion Service, Connexions Tyne and Wear and local schools information sharing and action to achieve shared targets were in place. Many schools had a named person to provide liaison with the YOT, which had recently taken a lead on extending school restorative justice processes.
- ◆ In order to promote behaviour and attainment, the YOT had provided education packages to all children and young people with whom they were engaged. This provision included access to specialist schooling, home tuition and work experience packages.

- ◆ The relationship between the Senior Education Welfare Officer and case managers was good, and was supplemented by the Education Support Worker who provided additional practical and personal support, for example transport and motivational interviewing.
- ◆ There was evidence of positive and focused work provided by the Connexions Personal Advisor in relation to E2E and a number of children and young people had been referred to Basic Skills for Life courses. Education provision for girls and young women with behavioural and emotional needs was being provided through a school in Newcastle upon Tyne.
- ◆ Arrangements for the assessment of children and young people were good. The YOT was able to access information and education history to inform Asset, and the education and Connexions staff attended internal allocation and review meetings. All children and young people were referred to education specialists, who moderated information to ensure accuracy and consistency. Contact with education providers informed assessments in 52% of cases.
- ◆ In a number of the cases we reviewed, children and young people presented with educational difficulties, often because of truancy and temporary or permanent exclusion. However, effective systems had been established to target these areas and our review showed that action had been taken in 93% of cases, which had so far proved effective in over half of the cases we saw. There were signs of educational improvements where initial assessments had been reviewed during orders.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Post-16 education provision was an area identified for improvement by the YOT because the small number of children and young people not engaged in ETE at the conclusion of orders was from this cohort. The YOT had recognised the need to develop partnerships with training providers in order to secure individually tailored programmes, and a number of initiatives had recently been established. It was too early to evaluate their impact.
- ◆ The needs of children and young people post-16 were assessed by the Connexions Personal Advisor, but Asset and Connexions profile systems were not interrogated to inform this process.
- ◆ There were no written protocols in place to ensure that the high standards of performance demonstrated by the Senior Education Welfare Officer would continue in times of absence or changes to personnel.

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◇ We interviewed a number of children and young people, from across a range of orders but mainly those on referral orders. More than half stated that their engagement with case managers had influenced their behaviour and many were focused on "staying out of trouble" and understanding the impact of offending on victims. Almost all rated their engagement as between eight and ten, and all had engaged with other people whom they regarded as having a significant influence during their orders to seek support and advice.
- ◇ Almost all interviewees had been treated fairly and with respect and one young person stated that he had benefited from the way in which he was able to talk in confidence about things that worried him.
- ◇ Children and young people were aware of the consequences of failure to attend appointments and had received relevant support in relation to a range of issues, including how they spent their own spare time and the way in which they thought about themselves and their offending. Most had been appropriately informed as to how they could make a complaint should the need arise.

Area for improvement:

- ◇ We were unclear whether there was a strategy in place to ensure that the YOT were able to fully consult with children and young people in order to inform service delivery.

3.3 Work with parents/carers

Key judgement:

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

Parenting was a key feature of the Children and Young People's Plan. Barnados provided parenting services via the Sungate project, which was supported and funded by both the Gateshead and Sunderland YOTs, together with local education services.

Strengths:

- ◇ There were clear referral routes in place to maximise the potential for parenting interventions. Sungate staff regularly attended YISP meetings and YOT case reviews in order to provide referral advice and

guidance. Initial assessments were conducted by Sungate staff, who had provided workshops to YOT staff and magistrates.

- ◆ A significant number of parents/carers were referred from YISP and mainstream orders. Many were referred to the eight-week 'lets talk' generic programme, which included self-esteem and substance misuse sessions. Parents/carers were encouraged to conduct topical research and the programme was evaluated via satisfaction and attendance surveys. A pilot programme specific to children and young people presenting with ADHD had been commenced and five parents/carers had so far attended. There were also referral processes in place from the anti-social behaviour strategy.
- ◆ We observed one 'lets talk' group with a number of participants. The focus of the session was mainly education, ADHD and behavioural issues. There was a credible exit strategy in place and some parents/carers had since returned as volunteers.
- ◆ An additional fortnightly support group was available and a number had successfully been referred to BRIDGE, which assisted parents/carers in accessing employment and educational opportunities. The involvement of fathers in parenting groups had been prioritised as an area for development.
- ◆ There were arrangements in place to assess parenting skills and, where appropriate, make referrals to Sungate staff for consideration of inclusion in parenting opportunities. In 15% of cases reviewed parents/carers were involved in an intervention and in the single case where we considered diversity to be a feature this had been addressed.
- ◆ Parents/carers had been able to contribute specific and individual information in a large number of assessments. In three quarters of the cases we reviewed, they were provided with feedback in relation to the development of the child or young person throughout their order.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ Work conducted with parents/carers by YOT staff was not adequately recorded.

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

This section is judged as adequate.

4.

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DTOs

Key judgement:

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

There was a limited number of children and young people sentenced to custody from the borough and there were four custodial establishments with whom YOT staff worked closely in relation to case management.

Strengths:

- ◆ Initial assessments and training plans were completed within the national standards for timeliness and quality, in all cases reviewed. They were thorough, containing information from a range of relevant sources, including parents/carers where appropriate, and reviewed at regular and appropriate intervals. Six out of seven initial training plans were informed by assessment and contained input from parents/carers, social services, the PCT and education providers, including the Connexions Personal Advisor. In all cases involving Looked After Children there was liaison with social services.
- ◆ In all cases, assessment and other specialist information was forwarded to custodial establishments within the appropriate national standard timescales and case managers regularly attended training plan, mid-term and release meetings.
- ◆ Risk of harm assessments were completed in all cases and were appropriately reviewed by a manager in most instances. In one case we considered that the level of risk was incorrectly assessed. Where the child or young person was considered to be vulnerable appropriate action had been taken in almost all cases.
- ◆ In a number of training plan reviews there were good examples of where liaison and advocacy with partner agencies had resulted in improvements in aspects of the child or young person's future, for example in relation to health issues and family relationships. In one training plan review the case manager had worked together with social services staff to produce a comprehensive 'core' assessment, which secured therapeutic foster care following a number of temporary placements.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ There were occasions where social services input to custody planning meetings was limited, resulting in a lesser quality of assessment information.
- ◆ There was limited use of the *What do you think?* tool in relation to custody cases.

Key judgement:

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

Strengths:

- ◆ Case managers were able to maintain effective liaison with children and young people, parents/carers, partner agencies and specialists during custodial sentences. Efforts to ensure that school placements were kept open during the custodial period were well evidenced and we were told that in all cases, children and young people were maintained on school roles during this absence.
- ◆ The YOT worked proactively to ensure that custodial establishments were suitably equipped to provide educational assessments and opportunities for children and young people to sit examinations. There was also good liaison with Connexions colleagues to increase the likelihood of ETE opportunities upon release.
- ◆ There was effective multi-agency information sharing at joint reviews, particularly in relation to housing needs, which resulted in stable accommodation and support on release. In all cases, arrangements to meet assessed educational needs were established prior to release, often with education authority assistance.
- ◆ The YOT had access to excellent educational and specialist provision in the Redbank secure community home, which included speech and language therapy.
- ◆ Where emotional health and substance misuse needs presented, appropriate referrals were made in most cases. Arrangements to meet assessed health needs prior to release from custody had been planned and the PCT had provided services on transfer to the community in all relevant cases.

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:

- ◆ The accommodation officer was currently involved in work to support children and young people on release from custody. Through arrangements with Byker Bridge accommodation providers all children and young people leaving custody had been successfully accommodated.
- ◆ There were excellent examples of proactive and creative approaches taken by case managers and specialists to acquire suitable accommodation. In one case the YOT had worked closely with providers to secure stable rented accommodation for a young woman on release from custody, and in a second case extensive family reconciliation work had been conducted to avoid a children's home placement.
- ◆ Educational needs were presented by children and young people in all the cases we reviewed and action had been taken to address these needs on release in 80% of cases. Licence conditions were used to reinforce education and training opportunities, and meetings with housing and training providers greatly assisted post-custody case management.
- ◆ Children and young people had regular contact with the Connexions Personal Advisor and in three out of four cases the child or young person had been successfully engaged in training or employment. In all cases, individual learning plans had been regularly reviewed and updated following release.
- ◆ Steps had been taken to ensure that children and young people responded to licence conditions on release in all cases and post-release arrangements in relation to the frequency of appointments arranged and kept were good. Judgements in relation to absences and associated breach or recall action were appropriate
- ◆ Post-release home visits were conducted in 71% of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ There were gaps in the provision of suitable post-release victim and restorative processes.
- ◆ In the cases we reviewed, offending behaviour work commenced in custody was not consistently continued post-release. However, since January 2006 it was likely that children and young people would begin offender behaviour programmes in custody together with a YOT worker, and these would continue on release.

- ◇ It was unclear whether written protocols or service level agreements were in place to cover arrangements in respect of post-release training and accommodation provision.

Key judgement:

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

Strength:

- ◇ Significant post-release work in relation to family and personal relationships, including living arrangements, had been conducted in all cases. Work to address attitudes to offending and lifestyle issues was conducted in 86% of cases reviewed and offending behaviour in 60%. Recent assessments demonstrated improvements in criminogenic factors in all cases. There were indications of further criminal activity post-release in three out of seven cases reviewed.

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.*

Victim services were delivered by members of the restorative justice and partnerships team, which consisted of seconded police officers and victim support staff.

Strengths:

- ◆ The victim working party consisted of the Operational Manager from the restorative justice and partnerships team, team leaders, reparation staff and a case manager. The group had been tasked with developing protocols and coordinating victim services. Whilst this was a positive move it was disappointing to find that representation from case managers in general had been difficult to attract.
- ◆ Victim support staff were involved in weekly allocation meetings where referrals were identified prior to engagement. The target to contact victims within five working days was regularly achieved. In 57% of cases, victims were consulted about restorative or reparative work and their views were incorporated into all cases of community reparation.
- ◆ The feedback we received from victims was that victim liaison staff had been very supportive. They had been able to offer practical support and had provided contact with victims for as long as was necessary. Victim satisfaction surveys were routinely monitored by the restorative justice and partnerships team and used to inform training needs and service delivery.
- ◆ Community reparation was conducted in 79% of cases and was commenced within three months of the start of the order in all cases.
- ◆ There was evidence of work with children and young people to raise their awareness of the impact of crime on victims in 41% of cases and letters of apology were used as a means of indirect reparation in half of all cases. However, further work was required to ensure that engagement was tailored to address offending that involved racist attitudes.
- ◆ Where children and young people were engaged with victims, appropriate account was taken of race, culture and diversity issues in more than 70% of cases.

- ◆ There were plans to develop a Gateshead borough victim website and brochure with emphasis on the provision of reparation information, together with a menu of indirect and direct community interventions.

Good practice

The YOT had worked closely with Nexus, a local public transport service, to establish a reparation site where children and young people were able to engage in manual and administrative work. A number of children and young people on referral orders and involved in YISPs had taken part in the preparation of posters featuring trespass, fare evasion and anti-social behaviour designed to prevent offending on the public transport system. The scheme had been so successful that Nexus hoped to extend its work to other YOTs. The Nexus School and Community Liaison Officer also attended referral order panels through which reparation opportunities had been generated.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Training in relation to victim engagement had been provided to staff, but in general work with victims was not considered to be a lead priority. Routine contact between case managers and victim staff was limited.
- ◆ There were cases of 'non-identification' of victims where, in our view, people affected by crime could be identified. For example where parents/carers were identified as victims, work with children and young people was not developed.
- ◆ Although a number of victims were invited to participate or consulted about restorative justice opportunities, actual participation by victims was limited. Although victim/offender mediation was offered to young victims there was no specific policy or priority against which staff could engage with children and young people as victims in restorative or reparative processes.
- ◆ Victims were invited to become involved in the final warning process in more than half of all cases reviewed, but actual involvement was limited.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This section is judged as adequate.

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 Gateshead 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.
-

1.2 Partnership and resources

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

1.3 Staff supervision, development and training

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

2. Work in the courts

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

3. Work with children and young people in the community

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

Key judgement

3.1.1: Children and young people are prevented from offending.

Evidence

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

3.2: Work with children and young people who have offended

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

3.3: Work with parents/carers

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

4. Work with children and young people subject to DTOs

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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

Key judgement

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

Evidence

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