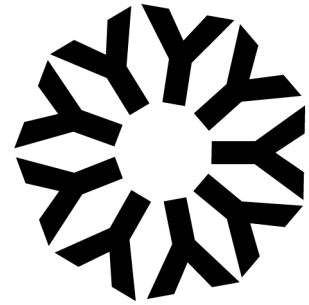


*Commission for Social Care Inspection
Estyn
Healthcare Commission
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
Office for Standards in Education
Social Services Inspectorate for Wales*



Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Follow-up Inspection Report on:
Hackney
Youth Offending Team

2006

Foreword

This inspection took place some six months after the publication of our initial report on the Hackney Youth Offending Team and was carried out at the same time as the Joint Area Review of Children's Services. We were pleased to find significant work had been undertaken to address the position and structure of the YOT, and the Board, management and staff were enthusiastic about the future. The immediate focus was to induct the new Youth Offending Team Manager and to establish the new staff structure to improve the framework and build on the progress made so far. Inevitably, there were some areas of work, such as enforcement and vulnerability, that required further attention, but staff training had been significant and the resulting improvements were beginning to show. The management of children and young people posing a risk of harm to others had also improved considerably.

We would therefore like to commend the managers and staff of the Hackney Youth Offending Team for the progress they have made thus far and look forward to hearing of their continuing improvement in the future.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

August 2006

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

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff from the Youth Offending Team, members of the Management Board and partner organisations for their assistance in ensuring the smooth running of this inspection.

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Glossary

ACPC	Area Child Protection Committee
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
DTO	Detention and Training Order
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMI Prisons	HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
ISP	Initial Supervision Plan
IT	Information Technology
JAR	Joint Area Review
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NHS	National Health Service
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PCT	Primary Care Trust
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOT	Youth Offending Team

Introduction

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

The initial inspection of the Hackney YOT, conducted in May and June 2005 during the second phase of the programme, revealed a range of shortcomings in the work of the YOT. Actions were being taken at the time of the inspection to address these concerns but had still to produce tangible results. We therefore decided to conduct a brief follow-up inspection in 2006, focusing on the recommendations contained in the initial report.

This follow-up inspection was conducted at the same time as the Hackney JAR of Children's Services and Corporate Assessment Judgements and findings from the follow-up inspection informed both processes.

Next steps

The report will be submitted to the Home Secretary, as the Secretary of State responsible for youth justice, with simultaneous copies to the Education and Health Secretaries. A copy will be sent to the YJB. Copies will also be made available to the press and placed on the website of HMI Probation at:

<http://www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

Key findings

Management and partnership arrangements

With leadership from the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Management Board, significant work had been undertaken to reposition the YOT within the Local Authority's structure and develop the Board. The changes and improvements made had strengthened the YOT's ability to respond to the challenges presented in Hackney and placed the partnership in a strong position to deliver against a complex set of needs and risks. The recent support from Thames Youth Court had added to the strength of the partnership. The current building did not meet the operational needs of the YOT and plans were in hand to secure new accommodation. Team restructuring had been agreed and work was underway to prepare staff for this change. Staff training had taken place over the last six months and the results of this investment were beginning to be reflected in improved service delivery. However, a future training plan needed to be developed as part of the overall strategy for the YOT.

Work with children and young people and their parents/carers

Although a range of issues still needed continued development, staff had responded to the initial inspection report constructively and there was a marked and positive change in their approach to the challenges they were working with. This had been recognised and appreciated, both internally by the managers and the Management Board, and externally by the Thames Youth Court. Areas of work to be addressed included enforcement, safeguarding and following up on vulnerability. Home visits also required attention as part of a more integrated approach to working with parents/carers, as well as parenting groups. In addition, there was a clear need to develop and improve working relations with Social Services.

Victims and restorative justice

Work with victims was still underdeveloped and the existing partnership was being reviewed at the time of the re-inspection. There had been a subsequent agreement with the provider to take the service back in-house.

Overall assessment

It was clear that significant work had been undertaken to address the concerns and recommendations identified in the original inspection carried out between May and June 2005. It should be noted that although our overall assessment following this re-inspection was that the YOT was still **requiring improvement**, we were both encouraged and impressed at the improvements made within a relatively short period of time.

The Management Board had effectively established its action plan and had appointed a new manager with full induction and support arrangements.

Improvement was still required in the YOT's practice to incorporate continued change management to develop a culture aimed at building children and young people's aspirations and where victims were brought central to all work. Continued focus on the full implementation of the risk management policy, joint work with Social Services on vulnerability, and developing work with diversity were critical areas where practice needed to be developed.

Diversity issues

Hackney YOT had a diverse staff group that reflected the community in which it operated. There had been particular involvement from the Management Board's police representative who had been instrumental in organising and delivering training for YOT staff on services for black and minority ethnic children and young people. There had been specific specialist training on child protection within black and minority ethnic families to support the safeguarding dimension of the work of the YOT. However, unless the level of home visiting increased, implementation of this training appeared uncertain.

Despite the diverse community in which the YOT operated, practice identified in the file reading analysis provided little evidence with regards to diversity work. Only two of the four relevant cases showed that diversity had been taken into account in the supervision plan for the child or young person.

The internal operations management group was clear about the need to improve its work around diversity and one manager was representing the YOT on a borough cross-agency working group tackling the needs of black and minority ethnic children and young people in Hackney.

Key statistics

File reading statistic	YOT file read 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	50%	84%	70-97%	100%
– adequate quality	56%	71%	29-93%	
Full risk of harm to others completed on relevant cases	44%	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	80%	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	60%	75%	52-100%	
Judgements about acceptability/unacceptability of absences are appropriate	44%	71%	40-96%	
Breach/recall action has taken place, if required, within the national standards timescale	50%	49%	13-100%	
Evidence of any criminal activity during the course of the order	6%	29%	15-48%	
Appropriate action has been taken if a child or young person is considered vulnerable to harm from self and others	33%	95%	67-100%	
Effective action is taken where there is evidence of educational difficulties	75%	60%	33-81%	90% ⁽³⁾
Appropriate referrals are made in cases of:				
– physical health	100%	n/a	n/a	
– mental/emotional health	63%	n/a	n/a	100% ⁽⁴⁾
– substance misuse	86%	n/a	n/a	100% ⁽⁵⁾
Victim was consulted about restorative/reparative justice work with child or young person	50%	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.

1. MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

1.1 Leadership

Recommendation

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that an action plan is devised to address the recommendations in the inspection report, published September 2005, and forwarded to the lead inspector within three months of the publication of the report.

The Police Borough Commander had taken up the Chair of the YOT Management Board in the summer of 2005, as the previous inspection was being finalised. A timely and suitable action plan had been agreed and was forwarded to the lead inspector as required. The Chief Executive of Hackney Council had also attended numerous Board meetings to provide executive support as well as to monitor the plan's progress.

Recommendation

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that terms of reference for the Management Board are developed and implemented to reflect its strategic role and those of its partner agencies.

There was a change in the membership of the Management Board that ensured appropriate representation across the range of interests. New terms of reference for the Board had been agreed by all partners and provided a strategic framework for its work. Plans were in place to include two new Board members from Connexions and Community Safety.

The Board had no formal or informal induction programme for new members. There were no ongoing annual strategy-planning events arranged.

Recommendation

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that appropriate lines of management are available to the YOT Manager to implement its recommendations regarding operational matters.

The YOT was to be repositioned within Hackney Local Authority, moving into Children's Services. This move was in transition at the time of the re-inspection to coincide with the appointment of a new YOT Manager, who took up post during the course of the re-inspection. Shortly after the inspection the YOT was relocated into Children's Services.

The interim period of change to address the recommendations from the initial inspection report had been supported by two consultants and the

acting YOT Manager. At the time of the re-inspection, the consultants were negotiating an effective period of hand-over and support for the incoming YOT Manager.

Recommendation

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that protocols with partner agencies, supported by operationally detailed arrangements, are developed, monitored and revised as appropriate.

There was a clear plan to develop new service level agreements and protocols with key partners. A range had already been developed, including East London and City NHS, Connexions, City and Hackney Mind, Metropolitan Police, Dalston Youth Project, Sub 19 (children and young people's alcohol and drug service) and AIS (Ambassadors in Sport). Plans were in place to review all current service level agreements.

Some agreements remained outstanding, including those with housing and probation, which would need early attention to provide a framework for effective partnership.

Monitoring arrangements were in place through the multi-agency operational managers partnership development group, and were fed-back directly to the Management Board through the Chair.

Recommendation

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that routine reports on the outcomes of the YOT's work are received by the Board and used to inform service delivery.

Performance outcome reports were regularly reported to the Management Board. The whole Board had undergone YJB training in understanding the performance reports, and performance data was presented in such a way as to make it accessible to Board members.

Recommendation

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that a review of staffing structure is undertaken to enable it to meet the needs of a developing service.

A staffing review had been undertaken and the Management Board had agreed a new structure that was being implemented, with work underway to prepare for the recruitment of operational managers.

1.2 Partnership and resources

Recommendation

The Partner organisations should ensure that the Learning Trust, Connexions and the YOT work together to improve engagement of children and young people in the ETE post-16 age group, including developing strategy.

The repositioning of the YOT into Children's Services had placed it strategically in a stronger position to improve the inclusion of children and young people post-16 through Connexions and the Learning Trust.

The Learning Trust was represented on the YOT Board and there were plans to include Connexions on the Board. Both the Learning Trust and Connexions were members of the multi-agency operational managers partnership development group.

The Learning Trust was working in partnership with the YOT and was providing a dedicated education worker to link with Connexions and schools. Recruitment for the post was successful, with a start date in March 2006. The worker would also be involved with the Coherent Behaviour Strategy for Hackney and the 14-19 year olds' NEET group, both providing a strategic link for the worker.

There was a clear partnership agreement between London East Connexions and the YOT, detailing the process for making referrals to personal advisors.

There was a clear partnership agreement between the Learning Trust and the YOT, providing a framework for joint integrated multi-agency provision for children and young people under the age of 19 requiring advice and support in accessing education and training.

Good practice

The Management Board had established and led an multi-agency operational managers partnership development group where cross-cutting operational issues were addressed. The Chair of this group reported back to the Board on progress and to lever support where difficulties had occurred.

1.3 Staff supervision, development and training

Recommendation

The YOT Manager should ensure that the policies and procedures in various stages of development are speedily completed and a timetable for implementation and monitoring is in place.

A complaints policy was in place and available in eight different languages.

There were a range of procedures in place, including those for administrative tasks such as petty cash and travel warrants, and guidance covering, amongst other issues, office duty and referral arrangements.

There were regular managers meetings where work on future protocols was discussed. Progress was being made on the development of protocols for secure email, court work, priority and prolific offenders, and policies on court, parenting and bail remand.

Recommendation

The YOT Manager should ensure that staff are consistently supervised and appraised within a performance management framework and there is regular and effective management oversight of casework.

Practically all staff were being supervised routinely and there was evidence of regular oversight of casework. Hackney Council's process was being used for annual appraisal. There was one specialist officer not supervised.

Management scrutiny of casework was mixed. However, the sample of casework seen during this re-inspection included some cases initiated before the original inspection and more recent cases appeared to have had more consistent management oversight.

Recommendation

The YOT Manager should ensure that an effective training programme is implemented and core areas of training in the use of and completion of Asset, child protection and risk management are fully addressed.

There was a comprehensive and demanding staff training programme in place that had mostly been delivered by the time of the re-inspection on generic and specialist skills such as Asset, effective practice, IT and training skills. It also covered a range of issues relating to safeguarding children and young people, such as basic first aid, risk assessment, child protection training, ACPC foundation in child protection, an introduction to the new All London Child Protection Procedures, working with black and minority ethnic families in child protection, the ACPC conference and a various associated courses such as drugs awareness.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

This section is judged as satisfactorily met.

2. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS/CARERS

Children and young people who have offended

Recommendation

The YOT Manager should ensure that final warning and referral orders are delivered in accordance with relevant guidance.

Final warnings were usually delivered within 20 working days of the decision to issue one and often included interventions. The YOT had developed a useful process chart to inform practice, but did not always follow these procedures. Had it done so, practice would have further improved.

In most cases the police did not notify the YOT within one working day of the decision to issue a final warning and the YOT had only met the timescale for carrying out assessments of the children and young people (within ten working days of notification by police) in two out of the five cases in the sample looked at during the re-inspection.

There was no specific training for final warnings.

Although referral panel members were now being provided with training and new members were offered induction, work on referral orders still required improvement. Referral order panel meetings were held within the 20 day national standard timescale in only two of the five cases examined. The elapsed number of days was more than ten in two of the three outstanding cases. Furthermore, the referral order contract had not been delivered within the agreed requirements in two of four cases

Whilst referral orders had a sufficient fit between planned interventions and the assessed risk of harm in three of the four relevant cases, contracts in two out of four cases did not take sufficient account of specific issues in relation to the child or young person to assist in the delivery of the programme of work and the successful completion of the contract.

Recommendation

The YOT Manager should ensure that the quality of initial Assets and supervision plans are improved to meet the requirements of National Standards.

Staff training on Asset assessments had been delivered.

Initial Asset assessments had been completed within the national standard requirements for timeliness and quality in 50% and 56% of the cases examined respectively, compared with 82% and 44% at the time of the

original inspection. The file analysis indicated that children and young people were usually involved with the Asset assessments and there was a positive involvement in 13 out of 16 cases in the sample. The *What do you think?* form had been used with the child or young person in 11 of the 16 cases in the sample.

DTO initial assessments were completed in a timely way, and children and young people were involved in three out of the four cases. However, there was little evidence of consultation with the sample of children and young people on DTOs, with none completing the *What do you think?* form or an alternative. There appeared to be a mixed performance on the quality of DTO Assets and the timely sending of these and other information to the secure establishment.

The child or young person's education provider had not been contacted in seven out of 13 relevant cases and the case file sample showed there was not enough involvement from the education provider in initial Assets.

Home visiting was not being given sufficient priority, with only one in ten of the relevant cases in the sample visited within the national standard requirements. In most of the cases examined, parents/carers were not involved in Asset completions. Similarly, case managers did not keep them informed of the development of the child or young person in five of the nine community cases examined and only kept in contact with parents/carers in two of the four DTO cases.

There was an explicit supervision contract and an Attendance and Behaviour Enforcement Protocol for children and young people using the service.

Significant improvement had been made in the quality of supervision and training plans. Most were completed in accordance with national standards timescales and nearly all had SMART objectives. Greater reference still needed to be made to victim and restorative processes. There was a sufficient fit in supervision and training plans in three out of the five cases between the interventions planned and the assessed risk of harm.

Although initial training plans were only undertaken in half of the sample, YOT workers were actively involved in all those undertaken and parents/carers were encouraged to attend. However, there were no views from home education or the PCT included in the plans. None of the four children and young people in the DTO sample had had their numeracy or literacy skills reassessed before leaving custody and two did not have their individual learning plan reviewed and updated following release, or shared with providers in the community.

Only two of the four cases provided evidence to show diversity had been taken into account in the plan for the child or young person.

There was a significant gap in joint working with Social Services relating to Looked After Children supervised by the YOT, with two out of the three relevant cases not showing any consultation during supervision.

Communication with Social Services about children who were not Looked After was also poor. In cases where the child or young person was

considered vulnerable to harm from self or others, action had been taken in only half of the cases (three out of six). Of those cases where action had been taken only one was felt to be appropriate to the needs of the child or young person. Where the child or young person was considered vulnerable and on a DTO, action was only taken in one of the two cases concerned and, in the case where the action was taken, it was not appropriate to the needs of the child or young person.

Recommendation

The YOT Manager should ensure that a risk policy is developed and implemented so that risk of harm assessments are completed on all appropriate cases, reviewed by managers, with case files annotated as appropriate.

A Risk Management Policy and a Safer Working Practices Policy were both in place. Comprehensive training arrangements had been planned and were being delivered.

In only four of the nine relevant community order cases had a full risk of harm assessment been completed, leaving five cases not assessed fully for risk of harm. Of the two cases identified as medium or high risk, only one showed evidence of management oversight. It was noted that the file sample included some cases that were already live at the time of the original inspection and the level of management oversight of cases appeared to be greater in the more recent cases.

A full risk of harm assessment had been undertaken on three out of the four children and young people on DTOs, but in only one of these cases was evidence found indicating the manager had reviewed the case. Any risk factors were, however, usually conveyed to the secure establishment in a timely way.

Recommendation

The YOT Manager should ensure that referrals to specialist workers are monitored to enable children and young people to have appropriate access to interventions relative to their assessed needs.

There had been significant improvements in referrals to specialist workers, particularly health and substance misuse, assisted by a more proactive approach by the workers themselves.

Monitoring specialist referrals took place with the assistance of the Information Manager, with the results fed-back to the internal operations management group.

The multi-agency operational managers partnership development group monitored referrals to specialist workers and were able to feed progress directly back to the Management Board.

The YOT had provided specialist training with a foundation course in motivational interviewing, a Connexions diploma, education attendance,

joint service training and working with resistance and poorly motivated people.

The case file sample showed that action was taken in most cases where there had been difficulties in education and was generally effective. However, eight out of 13 children and young people in the case sample who were aged 16 and over were not in further education or training and only five had had contact with Connexions.

The quality of specialist interventions was mixed for the four DTO cases examined. Difficulty with schooling was identified for two of the four children and young people and, where appropriate, action was taken. However, there were particularly poor interventions around the health issues identified. Three out of the four cases did not have their health needs appropriately established before release, with only two out of the four children and young people referred for an intervention.

There were early indications that Hackney YOT was involved in working with the Olympic 2012 developments and the Management Board was clear this provided the YOT with some real opportunities for the future in relation to the employment of children and young people.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS/CARERS

This section is judged as partly met.

3.

VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Assessment of the needs of victims of children and young people who have offended

Recommendation

The YOT Manager should ensure that victims are routinely consulted and their views taken into account.

Resources had been identified for work with victims and discussions were taking place about future arrangements between partnerships with the police and Nacro, the crime reduction charity. However, no clear strategy or plans had been agreed with partners around the work with victims.

There was a directory of reparation resources being developed by YOT staff.

Performance on consultation with victims was mixed and only five out of the ten victims involved in the case sample were asked about any reparative or restorative justice work with the child or young person, and only three had been invited to participate in such work. It was also noted that, in some cases, contact with victims was only made after a significant time delay, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the contact and risking re-victimising the individual in the process.

No victim had any direct or indirect reparation made to them by the child or young person involved. In addition, the child or young person had undertaken reparation work in only two out of the 12 cases looked at during the re-inspection.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This section is judged as partly met.

The joint inspection of YOTs

The joint inspection of YOT is an independent programme, funded by the Home Office and reporting to the Home Secretary. 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.

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 being carried out in line with the Government's commitment to proportionate and coordinated inspection in local government. It is:
 - proportionate to risk, and fieldwork will only be undertaken where necessary to support findings or to disseminate good practice
 - coordinated with, and complements, other inspection programmes, including the JARs and inspection of Young People's Partnership in Wales
- ◇ The Hackney YOT follow-up inspection focused on implementation of the recommendations contained in the initial inspection report. It involved a file reading exercise and meetings with relevant managers, representatives of partner organisations and members of the YOT staff.
- ◇ Performance was scored, using a similar approach to that adopted in phase two of the inspection programme. Each section of the inspection was individually assessed. Judgements were defined as:
 - **Fully met** – exceptional performance beyond the requirements of national standards and other relevant guidelines
 - **Satisfactorily met** – a sufficient level of performance to assure the joint inspection team that the YOT is progressing satisfactorily
 - **Partly met** – less than sufficient performance on the majority of items
 - **Not met** – inadequate performance on most items.
- ◇ **The overall performance of the YOT** was assessed as:
 - **Commendable** – indicating strong management performance and exemplary work with both children and young people and in relation to victims and restorative justice.
 - **Good** – either the section relating to management or work with children and young people is fully met and the other sections are at least satisfactorily met.
 - **Good basis for development** – the sections relating to management arrangements and work with children and young people are both assessed as satisfactorily met and work with victims and restorative justice is being taken forward.
 - **Requiring improvement** – either the section on management arrangements or work with children and young people is assessed as partly or not met.
 - **Requiring significant improvement** – neither the section on management arrangements or work with children and young people is considered to have been satisfactorily met.

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:

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