



JOINT INSPECTION OF YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS
HM INSPECTORATE OF PROBATION
6th Floor, South Wing, Trafford House, Chester Road,
Stretford, Manchester M32 0RS
Tel: Media enquiries: 0207 035 3535
Other enquiries: 0161 869 1301

**Press
Notice**

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**ROTHERHAM YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE –
PUBLICATION OF INSPECTION REPORT**

The latest report from the third phase of inspections of Youth Offending Teams (YOT) in England and Wales was published today. A multi-agency inspection team carried out Rotherham Youth Offending Service (YOS) inspection.

Andrew Bridges, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, said:

“The service had a significant voice in the criminal justice and children’s service agenda within the area and was well respected. The service had a positive ethos with strong management and a committed staff group. Partnership work was well established, with sound formal and informal links.

Operational work was good, with creative interventions taking account of the diverse needs of the children and young people under supervision. Risk of harm work was good and reparation initiatives were established and appreciated within the community. Some aspects of practice required further attention, and this included elements of pre-sentence report quality, consistency in the scoring of Asset and the setting and reviewing of objectives in supervision plans. The routine collection of performance data could be expanded to further improve service delivery.

We found both managers and staff open, willing to learn and improve their practice and we are therefore confident that the recommendations in this report will be used to improve what is already a positive, well managed and committed service.”

The report’s main findings are:

Management

- The YOS had a high profile within the Safer Rotherham Partnership which, amongst other roles, undertook the strategic management of the YOS.
- Links to the Children’s Board meant that the YOS strategic agenda was able to cover both criminal justice and children’s services in an integrated way. This system worked well with clear lines of accountability.
- The YOS Manager was an impressive and energetic leader with a clear vision for the service and led an extremely committed staff group.
- Whilst YJB performance data was routinely gathered and informed individual practice, other performance data was not routinely collected to improve service delivery.

Work in the courts

- A good relationship existed between the YOS and youth court with representatives from the court sitting on the YOS Management Board. Staff in the youth court had a high opinion of the YOS and its staff.
- The YOS provided a designated court team that worked from its own office in the court building. Information sharing at both a strategic and operational level was excellent, with formal and informal meetings occurring to share practice issues.
- Bail support linked well with specialist interventions. Pre sentence reports (PSR) were mostly completed on time with clear proposals for sentencing. However, further attention should be given to improving the overall quality of Pre Sentence Reports by focusing particular attention on the use of Asset(YJB assessment tool), offence analysis, risk of reoffending, risk of harm and victim sections.

Work with children and young people in the community

- The YOS contracted preventative work out to a voluntary provider who delivered focused and thorough interventions, with significant levels of contact and good recording.
- Attention to the intensity of the interventions being received by some individual children or young people may produce efficiency gains.
- Attendance rates of children and young people who had offended and were on community sentences was particularly high. There were some impressive examples of assessments, in terms of timeliness and quality, with very good attention to the assessment and management of risk of harm. However, the quality of supervision plans was reduced by a lack of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time limited) objectives.

- Whilst plans were generally being prepared on time, the lack of attention to the quality of the objectives led to an overall low score in this area.
- Staff were sensitive to the diversity needs of children and young people.
- There was insufficient evaluation of the outcomes for both these areas of service delivery. Parenting work required further development.
- Enforcement action needed to be improved, including the recording of reasons for absences.

Work with children and young people subject to Detention and Training Orders (DTOs)

- Good links existed with secure establishments, with procedures in place regarding information sharing. YOS case managers and specialist staff were highly committed to attending training plan meetings and reviews in Young Offender Institutions (YOIs).
- Attendance was seen as a priority by the YOS management team and action was taken to ensure that staff could attend.

Victims and restorative justice

- Victim work was undertaken in conjunction with a voluntary provider called REMEDI. Work was sensitive and thorough and received praise from victims.
- The YOS used a range of placements for reparation work. Some of the projects were exemplary in how they extended the skills of children and young people and delivered a meaningful service that was appreciated by the beneficiaries.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The inspection of Rotherham YOT took place between May and June 2006.
2. Rotherham had a total population of 248,175, measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 23.6% were aged 0-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was slightly higher than the average for England, which was 22.7%.
3. Nine Inspectorates conduct the Youth Offending Team Inspections. They are Commission for Social Care Inspection, Estyn (HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation, Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.
4. The YOT inspection programme started in June 2003. All 155 YOTs within England and Wales are being inspected over a five to six year cycle.
5. The inspection will be carried out in line with the Government's commitment to proportionate and coordinated inspection in local government, informed by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment results and the Wales Programme for Improvement. A programme has therefore been developed that:
 - is proportionate to risk and only inspects those areas of work where a team is performing well in order to disseminate good practice
 - complements, and is coordinated with, other inspection programmes, including those currently being developed following the publication of the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters* (2003)
 - takes account of YOTs' recent development as organisations.
6. Comprehensive standards and criteria have been developed to cover the first phase of the inspection, focusing on:
 - management and partnership arrangements
 - children and young people considered at risk of offending
 - children and young people who offend
 - parents/carers of children and young people who are at risk of offending or who offend
 - work with victims of crime.