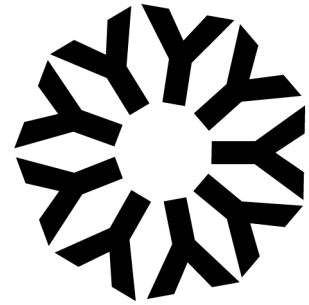


*Audit Commission
Commission for Social Care Inspection
Estyn
Healthcare Commission
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
Office for Standards in Education
Social Services Inspectorate for Wales*



Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:
Cumbria
Youth Offending Service

2005

Foreword

The inspection of the Cumbria Youth Offending Service was part of the second phase of the inspection programme of youth offending teams across England and Wales. We were pleased to find a service that adequately addressed the needs of children and young people who had offended. The expertise of staff from relevant disciplines combined to provide appropriate interventions for those who needed them. We found a service that was enthusiastic and committed, with staff taking a positive approach to the inspection and who were keen to develop practice.

The Management Board, which comprised members at appropriate levels of seniority, had recently restructured and now provided direction, support and budgetary arrangements. The work of the two subcommittees of the Board, in relation to performance monitoring and human resources, was of particular importance in contributing to an improvement in service.

We did find a number of areas that required improvement. Greater consistency was needed between the work of the YOS' three divisional teams. Quality of Assets and reviews needed to be monitored regularly to improve practice, and the same applied to supervision plans and their reviews. More attention needed to be paid to risk and enforcement issues and group work provision. The Cumbria Youth Offending Service did not have a systematic approach for gathering and using information on the outcomes of its work with children and young people. The supervision, training and appraisal of staff would benefit from a more consistent approach.

Our overall assessment of the Cumbria Youth Offending Service was that it had a good basis for its future development and we are confident that the service will continue to progress well. This report contains a number of recommendations that will assist the service in moving forward.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

March 2005

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in 2004.

- ◆ The file reading took place week commencing 11 October.
- ◆ The second week commenced on 22 November.

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	3
Glossary	4
Introduction	5
Key findings	6
Overview	9
1. MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS	10
2. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS/CARERS	16
3. VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	27
The joint inspection of YOTs	31
Inspection arrangements	33
Scoring approach	35
Next steps	37

Acknowledgements

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

We would particularly like to express our gratitude to Yvonne Lake, Deborah Royston and Eunice Harper for their commitment to the inspection.

<i>Lead Inspector</i>	<i>Rhona Bradley Commission for Social Care Inspection</i>
<i>Inspectors</i>	<i>Jon Bowman Office for Standards in Education, Trevor Brunton HM Inspectorate of Probation, Helen Cash HM Inspectorate of Probation, Shirley Magilton HM Inspectorate of Probation, Mike Mullis HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Justin Thacker Healthcare Commission</i>
<i>Practice Assessors</i>	<i>Suki Binning, Penny Davies</i>
<i>Support Staff</i>	<i>Natalie Dewsnap, Grace Dickin, Rachel Dwyer</i>
<i>Programme Manager</i>	<i>Liz Calderbank HM Inspectorate of Probation</i>
<i>Area Assessor</i>	<i>Samantha Eastwood</i>

Glossary

ASDAN	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CPN	Community Psychiatric Nurse
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
DTO	Detention and Training Order
ESF	European Social Fund
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
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
NFR	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PNC	Police National Computer
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SQIFA	Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
YIP	Youth Inclusion Programme
YISP	Youth Inclusion Support Panel
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOS	Youth Offending Service
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, established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The programme is being implemented in three phases, the first of which was completed in July 2004 and focused on establishing benchmarks for the later phases of the inspection.

This, the second phase of the inspection, started in September 2004 and builds on the findings from the first. Few changes have been made. Emphasis has continued to be placed on two core areas:

- ◆ the management and partnership arrangements, including the role and functioning of the local Management Board
- ◆ work with children and young people, which now encompasses prevention of offending, work with children and young people who have offended and work with their parents/carers.

The third core area to be covered by the inspection is work with victims and restorative justice. Whilst these issues are seen as no less important, it is acknowledged that YOTs may be at different stages of development in this area of work. We do, however, expect a high level of engagement with victims to be demonstrated, with appropriate arrangements for restorative justice.

Key findings

Management and partnership arrangements

- ◇ There was an effective Management Board structure that had recently been reorganised in order to provide a more strategic lead.
- ◇ The Head of Service was actively involved in a number of local and national priority strategic groups, including the LCJB and the CDRPs.
- ◇ A range of services was available from the YOS through its partner organisations. All partners fulfilled their statutory staffing and resource obligations.
- ◇ Protocols between the YOS and its partners were in place, but not always put into operation.
- ◇ Partner agencies did not provide the staff seconded to the YOS with any ongoing support, training development or contact.
- ◇ Health and education staff undertook a considerable amount of core work that detracted from their specialist roles.
- ◇ The approach to supervision, training and appraisal lacked structure.

Work with children and young people and their parents/carers

- ◇ The geographical spread of county of Cumbria meant that, in practice, the three divisional teams of the YOS worked separately to some degree.
- ◇ Further work was required on a consistent approach to assessments across the YOS, in particular risk assessments.
- ◇ There was inconsistency in approach to group work, parenting, risk and enforcement. This was accounted for, to some extent, by the geographical spread of Cumbria, but was also indicative of variations in YOS practice and implementation between the three divisional teams.
- ◇ The respective roles of the ISSP Coordinator and divisional operational managers needed to be clarified.
- ◇ Parenting work was well planned, but was provided inconsistently throughout the area.
- ◇ Lack of evaluation of programmes and interventions hindered the development of practice.
- ◇ There was no offending-behaviour work taking place in planned or structured groups.

Victims and restorative justice

- ◇ Restorative justice workers attempted to contact all known victims.
- ◇ Little direct victim work was being conducted.

- ◆ Assessment and direct work with children and young people who had offended gave little attention to victim impact.
- ◆ Victim Support were involved, but not in a formal way.
- ◆ Whilst some victim work was conducted, especially in referral panels, direct reparation was not systematically available.
- ◆ More work was required on restorative justice issues.

Overall assessment

The overall performance of the Cumbria YOS was assessed as being a **good basis for development**. The YOS had developed into a service that was meeting the basic requirements of children and young people who had offended and those at risk of offending. The service now needed to become much more focused, planned and structured in its approach to working with partners and in direct work with children and young people. The YOS had recognised this and had responded positively by instigating a number of recent changes, including a restructure of the Management Board, but accepted that much still needed to be done.

The inspection team viewed this development as a means by which real progress could be achieved. Whilst the structure of the YOS mirrored the divisional operation of all agencies, it had led to inconsistencies in approach, in both practice and management across the three divisional teams. Training and development of YOS staff could be improved, particularly in relation to diversity issues. Monitoring and evaluation of work should be conducted across the area, for both practice development reasons as well as performance management.

We found a committed service with enthusiasm and a genuine concern for the children and young people in Cumbria. Given the wholesale changes taking place throughout the agencies working in this area, and the high level of engagement and willingness to effect real change, it was our belief that the Cumbria YOS was well placed to respond to the issues raised in this inspection.

Recommendations

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that:

- ◇ an action plan is devised to address the following recommendations and forwarded to the lead inspector within three months of the publication of this report
- ◇ consistency of performance throughout the YOS' three divisional teams is achieved through the development of a performance management culture, compatible with that of Cumbria County Council
- ◇ the role of specialist staff within the YOS, in particular health, education and Connexions, should be reviewed to make certain that their skills and expertise are being deployed effectively to meet the needs of children and young people.

The Head of Service should ensure that:

- ◇ operational management training is addressed
- ◇ performance management data is used to inform and improve service delivery across the three divisional teams
- ◇ staff are supervised and appraised within a performance improvement framework
- ◇ staff are aware of the requirements placed upon them and are familiar with practice developments, performance improvement, and policies and procedures
- ◇ orders are enforced consistently across the YOS in accordance with national standards
- ◇ the risk of harm policy is communicated to all staff and implemented effectively, so that full risk of harm assessments are completed in all relevant cases and are reviewed regularly by managers.

The health services should ensure that:

- ◇ the health representatives on the YOS Management Board should meet the health staff seconded to the YOS to familiarise themselves with the work of the YOS and the practice issues in relation to health
- ◇ agreements are reached about how a tier 4 drugs service should be provided
- ◇ consideration is given to how the provision for dual diagnosis services for YOS clients could be improved.

The Education Department should ensure that:

- ◇ ETE provision is consistent throughout the area.

All partner agencies should ensure that:

- ◇ links are maintained with their seconded staff.

Overview

- ◆ The county of Cumbria is located in the north west of England. It incorporates the six local authorities of Allerdale, Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle, Copeland, Eden and South Lakeland. It has the Irish Sea to the west stretching from the Solway Firth to Morecambe Bay, the Scottish border to the north and the Pennine hills to the east.
- ◆ Cumbria had a total population of 487,607 as measured in the Census 2001. Of this population 21.3% were aged 0-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was lower than the average for England and Wales of 22.7%.
- ◆ Cumbria had a predominantly white population (99.3%). This was much higher than the average for England of 90.9%. The percentage of Asian or Asian British residents (0.2%) was lower than the average for England (4.6%). As was the percentage of Black or Black British residents at 0.06%, which was much lower than the English average of 2.1%.
- ◆ The level of employment in Cumbria was the same as the average for England and Wales at 60.6%. The level of unemployment was 3.4%, also the same as the average for England and Wales. A large proportion of the population was retired at the time of the census, 16.6% compared to 13.6% across England and Wales. The population of students, both economically active and inactive, was much lower than the national average, 5.0% and 7.3% respectively.
- ◆ Cumbria County Council was classified as weak in the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2004.
- ◆ The YJB summary of YOT performance against the key performance indicators for 2003/2004 ranked Cumbria YOS in 140th position.

1.

MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

1.1

Leadership

Inspection criteria

The Management Board:

- ◇ *provides strategic oversight and direction and coordinates the provision of youth justice services by the YOT and partner organisations*
- ◇ *is made up of appropriate representatives who attend and participate actively in meetings*
- ◇ *ensures the provision of accurate and timely data returns, both for its own use and that of the YJB*
- ◇ *gives support and guidance to the YOT Manager, ensuring that they engage with local and national priorities*
- ◇ *ensures that the Youth Justice Plan is implemented.*

At the time of the Cumbria YOS inspection, a number of developments were taking place in the area that had a direct effect on the YOS, particularly in relation to partnership and management arrangements. Cumbria County Council had been assessed as a poorly performing council in the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2004. The CSCI had assessed the social services department as delivering poor quality of services to children with little prospect for improvement and was in the process of conducting a follow-up inspection of Children's Services. An Interim Director of Social Services had been in place for five months and had recently assumed the Chair of the YOS Management Board. However, he was to relinquish this role in favour of the new Chief Executive of the County Council, who took up post during this inspection.

The effects of these considerable structural changes to the local authority and the social services were of significant importance in respect of the YOS strategic and management arrangements. The appointment of the new Chief Executive had acted as a catalyst for change and he had taken immediate action to bring the YOS in line with a new central performance management unit of the County Council.

The YOS Management Board met regularly and statutory agencies were represented at the most appropriate level of seniority. There had been previous concerns about LEA representation on the Board, but this had now been resolved through the attendance of the Assistant Director. A health representative had recently been appointed to the Board who expressed a lack of knowledge and understanding about the work of the YOS. This could be addressed through an induction session for new partner representatives

and the possibility of 'case live' discussions taking place at Board meetings. There were no voluntary sector or victim groups' representatives on the Board.

Management Board meetings were well attended and reports were prepared and delivered by the Head of Service and the Performance Manager. The Board was kept well informed of strategic planning, national and local performance, and budget matters and discussions were robust with the Head of Service being held to account. The recent restructure of the Board had resulted in the establishment of two subcommittees to look in greater detail at finance, performance and development. The work of these subcommittees and the Board contributed to a YOS Management Board Development Day: a longstanding event held annually to determine the future planning and direction of the work of the YOS within the governance framework of the Board. Issues agreed during the course of the day included the preparation of the Management Board Development Action Plan and the identification of Board members responsible for taking actions forward.

Performance and data management were well developed in the YOS through the work of the Performance Manager. Returns to the YJB and other data returns were regularly collated and analysed for the identification of targets and performance. However, much more could be achieved in this area if performance was measured on an outcome basis and used by the three divisional teams to inform practice.

Strengths:

- ◆ The role of the Chief Executive of Cumbria County Council as Chair of the YOS Management Board was a key strength.
- ◆ The Board was made up of representatives of the partner agencies with sufficient seniority to make decisions.
- ◆ The Management Board Development Action Plan provided a strategic framework.
- ◆ Good cross-agency working relationships existed at management level.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Those members most recently appointed to the Management Board required greater understanding of the work of the YOS, through training and visits to the three divisional teams.
- ◆ The divisional teams did not make best use of the performance data available to inform the development of practice.

1.2

Partnership and resources

Inspection criteria

- ◇ *A range of interventions and services are provided to meet the needs of children and young people who have offended and those at risk of offending.*
- ◇ *YOTs are appropriately staffed by partners according to legislation and Home Office guidance.*
- ◇ *The Youth Justice Plan reflects partner strategies.*
- ◇ *Protocols have been agreed between the YOT, its statutory partners and other organisations, outlining the level of service, human resources issues and funding arrangements.*
- ◇ *Contracts are in place with other agencies to ensure the coordination of work and the appropriate delivery of services to meet the needs of children and young people.*

The Head of Service played a strategic role in the development of services and was well respected by the partner agencies. She was also a key figure in the relevant local partnerships, such as the LCJB and LSP.

The county of Cumbria covers a huge geographical area and as such the operational work of the Cumbria YOS was structured over three separate and distinct divisions that mirrored the internal boundaries of its statutory partners. Although monthly management meetings were held, it was evident that the three divisional teams of the YOS worked independently of each other, each headed by an operational manager. Local divisional links were maintained through work with the district councils, CDRPs and police and probation divisional structures. There was, therefore, a degree of inconsistency in the work of the YOS and practice across the divisions, and the three divisional operational managers did not work together.

All agencies had seconded staff to the YOS. Whilst secondment agreements were in place (particularly for staff from the police, probation, health and education), little contact was maintained by some of the agencies with their secondees. We were told that there were no mechanisms in place for regular meetings, nor had any review been undertaken of the arrangements between the police and probation area and their seconded staff. Consequently these agencies had little knowledge of how their staff members were deployed in the YOS.

In relation to staff from social services, some were qualified and others were not. At the time of the YOS inspection, a review of social services staff was being carried out in respect of national legislation requiring the registration of social workers. Unqualified social workers were being assessed for future training in order to gain qualification and registration. This directly affected those social services staff seconded to the YOS who did not wish to undertake the qualification and were therefore being reassessed as to their suitability to remain in the YOS. This was a protracted issue for the Head of Service who was involved in extensive

negotiations with the County Council, the social services department and the relevant trade unions. Inevitably, the process had had an adverse effect on staff morale, which had impacted on the work of the YOS.

The YOS had agreed protocols and SLAs were in place, but these needed to be regularly reviewed and updated. Some operational staff had not seen the protocols relating to their seconding arrangements and were consequently uncertain about the remit of their role, or the expectations placed on them by their parent organisation.

The review, evaluation and measurement of services were not carried out either centrally or on a divisional basis and there appeared to be little operational planning. This meant that, in some instances, policies, protocols and SLAs could be open to misinterpretation. One example was the Connexions personal advisers seconded to the YOS, who were working as generic YOS officers undertaking final warning work with the seconded police officers. Another example was the health workers who also operated as generic rather than specialist YOS officers.

Strengths:

- ◆ All partners contributed staff and resources to meet the needs of the YOS.
- ◆ There was a largely committed and enthusiastic staff group.
- ◆ Specialist workers were available to the YOS.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Service delivery across the three divisional teams was inconsistent.
- ◆ There was little evidence of area-wide planning and operational managers did not work together.
- ◆ The Cumbria County Council policy on the recruitment of qualified social workers needed to be resolved as soon as possible.
- ◆ Links between seconded staff and their parent agencies required attention as agencies maintained little contact with their seconded staff.
- ◆ Policies, procedures and SLAs needed to be regularly reviewed and updated.

1.3

Staff supervision, development and training

Inspection criteria

- ◆ *Staff are regularly supervised in accordance with their developmental needs and assessed level of competence.*
- ◆ *Annual appraisals contain objectives which are linked to local and national targets.*
- ◆ *All staff are provided with appropriate training opportunities to equip them to meet the requirements of the Youth Justice Plan.*
- ◆ *Staff are appropriately qualified and have had a satisfactory enhanced criminal record check within the past three years.*
- ◆ *Volunteers are appropriately trained, available for YOT activities and have had a satisfactory enhanced criminal record check within the past three years.*
- ◆ *Joint agreements are in place for the management of disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures.*
- ◆ *Complaints are properly managed.*

The Head of Service received monthly supervision from the Assistant Director, Children and Families, Social Services. Staff received supervision on a monthly basis from their line manager. Given the divisional structure of the YOS, it was clear that the responsibility for implementation of policies in respect of supervision, appraisal, staff development and training was delegated to the three divisional operational managers. This led to variations across the YOS, as the approach adopted depended very much on the interpretation and ability of the individual operational manager.

The divisional structure of the YOS meant that staff worked generically and management was based in the local divisional team. A recent development had been the appointment of an additional Operational Manager for Projects and Development. With no divisional team to manage, this role assumed responsibility for ISSP, YISP, YIP and the prevention work of the YOS. These responsibilities were combined with additional duties in respect of the Children's Fund and grant applications. It was apparent that central coordination of these areas of work was advantageous to the YOS. However, there were clear differences and tensions between this work and that of the divisional teams. This was particularly relevant in respect of ISSP where, although the ISSP Coordinator held functional responsibility for the delivery of the programme across the whole YOS, the ISSP workers were line managed by their divisional operational manager.

There was no YOS lead for training and development of staff, and training needs were identified on an individual basis. The Head of Service had undertaken YJB management training and this should be made available to all operational managers. The YJB Effective Practice training was available to staff, although some queried its long-term value as a qualification in

view of the social services' insistence on the professional social work qualification as the only means of career progression within the YOS.

The role of Practice Development Officer had been created in each of the divisional teams to develop effective practice and provide advice and consultative assistance to YOS officers. Whilst this role was still being developed, we noted that the post-holders still maintained a caseload and did not supervise staff. These factors may inhibit the development of the role. We were similarly surprised that the Practice Development Officers reported to the divisional operational managers, and that consideration had not been given to making them accountable to the Operational Manager for Projects and Development so that they could develop service delivery across the YOS.

There were health and safety protocols in place as well as lone working and out-of-hours procedures that staff were aware of, but did not always follow. We found that much of the work with children and young people who had offended took place on home visits, due to the geography of Cumbria which hindered office-based work, and that, whilst initial risk assessments may have been completed, they were rarely reviewed.

As most staff were seconded to the YOS, there were no YOS-specific disciplinary and grievance procedures in place. Staff members were aware of their own agency procedures. There was no complaints policy other than those of partner agencies and the local authority, but the YOS had recognised the need to look at this.

Many of the staff group had been with the YOS since it started and CRB checks on all staff and volunteers had not been completed.

Strengths:

- ◆ Staff received monthly supervision.
- ◆ An appraisal document and policy was being developed.
- ◆ Staff were being supported to undertake training and development.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Consistent application of policies, procedures and protocol throughout the YOS.
- ◆ The role of all the operational managers and their functional responsibilities required review.
- ◆ YJB management training for all operational managers.
- ◆ An urgent review of CRB checks was required.

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

2.1 Assessment

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

Inspection criteria

- ◇ *There is a mechanism to identify those children and young people within the area who are at risk of offending.*
- ◇ *There are arrangements to assess the needs of those individuals identified as being at risk of offending and these arrangements take account of cultural differences, diversity and safeguarding issues.*

Prevention work was part of the generic work undertaken in the divisional teams. Staff with a personal interest in a particular area of work, such as parenting, would take the lead on its development. This approach was echoed in the management group with operational managers taking functional responsibility for particular areas of work.

We felt that prevention work was beginning to become much more focused through the creation of the new post of Operational Manager for Projects and Development, particularly as it linked the various funding streams of the Children's Fund, YJB, SRB, NRF and voluntary sector funding bodies. However, the divisional teams were less aware of the potential benefits to their own work and the connections between this central function and the teams could be improved.

The majority of prevention work was commissioned as part of the Children's Fund, delivered by a junior YISP, to which the YOS had access. The identification and assessment of children and young people at risk of offending was conducted by the education department and passed through the Operational Manager for Projects and Development. The assessment process was therefore limited. There was little evidence of monitoring or evaluation of YISP and other prevention work linked to YOS outcomes and this could be improved over time.

Strengths:

- ◇ Operational management of prevention projects was good.
- ◇ YOS links with the local authority's and voluntary groups' databases in order to help identify children and young people at risk of offending.

- ◆ Projects were based on a clear financial analysis and the required funding streams were identified.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Links between the three divisional teams could be improved.
- ◆ Dissemination of information should be developed further.
- ◆ There was no assessment or monitoring of those at risk.
- ◆ The range and scope of interventions should be evaluated.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFFENDED

Inspection criteria

- ◆ *An Asset assessment is satisfactorily completed at the beginning and end of all interventions which takes account of cultural differences, diversity and safeguarding issues.*
- ◆ *Risk of harm to others is fully assessed.*
- ◆ *Risk of harm, either to self or from others, is fully assessed.*
- ◆ *Specialist assessments are undertaken on those with specific needs or who are assessed as a risk of harm to others.*
- ◆ *Resources have been identified and capacity exists to meet assessed need.*

Overall, the initial assessment of children and young people who had offended was satisfactory. 82% of Assets were completed in a timely fashion, with 76% reaching the quality target. There was evidence in the file read that children and young people had been involved in the process. However, further attention needed to be given to the completion of reviews. The Performance Manager checked Asset completion for data return purposes, but did not pursue individuals or teams if gaps were identified.

The YOS had developed a comprehensive risk of harm policy, but not all staff were aware of it, or were using it effectively. The management oversight of cases identified as having a potential risk of harm also needed to be strengthened. Discussion with staff revealed different approaches to risk between the three divisional operational managers and there were occasions when tensions were highlighted. There was no evidence of any written advice being given or of review, monitoring or reassessment.

Specialist assessments were available from health and substance misuse workers. Health workers conducted specialist assessments using SQIFA, following the completion of Assets resulting in a score of two or more. If necessary the case was referred to the health workers and/or substance misuse workers.

Our file read showed that there were significant concerns expressed about the use of alcohol and drugs-related offending, particularly leading to aggression and violence: 21% of offences committed were for violent offences, and alcohol and substance misuse was recorded in 56% and 31% respectively. Of these, only 45% were referred to the appropriate services. Generally, the health workers saw all substance misuse cases initially and would refer the more complex ones to the substance misuse workers. This mechanism ensured that only appropriate referrals were made to the substance misuse workers and the local substance misuse service, a voluntary organisation called *Straightline*. On receiving a referral the substance misuse workers completed their own assessment using a tool developed by *Straightline*.

As the education staff worked generically within the YOS, no separate education assessment was undertaken.

The YOS was fully staffed according to resource allocation, but there were gaps due to staff sickness.

Strengths:

- ◆ Initial assessments were conducted satisfactorily.
- ◆ Specialist assessments were available for health issues.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The risk of harm policy had not been fully implemented and staff were not aware of the procedures.
- ◆ Operational management of Asset required regular review mechanisms to be put in place.

PARENTS/CARERS

Inspection criteria

- ◆ *An assessment of the parenting skills and needs of the parents/carers of children and young people who have offended or are at risk of offending has been undertaken and is used to inform any intervention.*

Parenting groups were planned and delivered on a local basis by the parenting worker in each divisional team, run in conjunction with the LEA. One of the operational managers had the lead for parenting, but as each group was based in the locality there was no consistent approach across the county.

Parents/carers were referred to the parenting worker in their local divisional team, who then conducted an assessment. This was done informally and the parenting assessment tool was not used. Parents/carers of children and young people at risk of offending who might benefit from

attendance at the parenting group, were identified and approached by the LEA. Again, no formal assessment was made.

Few parents/carers were involved in the completion of initial Assets. Case workers carried out informal assessments of their needs as part of the supervision process, but this was neither recorded formally nor noted in the case file.

Strengths:

- ◆ Establishment of three parenting groups in the area.
- ◆ Parents/carers expressed great satisfaction with the groups.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The needs of parents/carers were not assessed against a formal assessment tool.
- ◆ Not all parents/carers were assessed for suitability.

2.2 Interventions

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

Inspection criteria

- ◆ *There are arrangements in place to provide interventions for those children and young people who are assessed as at risk of offending.*

Interventions in respect of children and young people at risk of offending were provided through the Children's Fund, YISP and YIP. The voluntary sector was also involved in providing interventions through Barnardos.

The recent appointment of the Operational Manager for Projects and Development would provide additional links to these projects that had been considered rather distant from the core work of the YOS.

Strength:

- ◆ The establishment of the post of Operational Manager for Projects and Development.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ Links between parenting work and the core work of the YOS needed to be strengthened.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFFENDED

Inspection criteria

- ◇ *Interventions with children and young people who have offended are targeted in areas of assessed need, such as education, health and parental relationships, etc.*
- ◇ *Interventions with children and young people who have offended are specific to the needs of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups, those with disabilities and take account of safeguarding issues.*
- ◇ *Supervision plans are written in accordance with national standards, emanate from Asset and contain SMART objectives.*
- ◇ *Interventions are structured, evaluated and consistent with the principles of effective practice.*
- ◇ *Frequency of appointments for children and young people who have offended is consistent with national standards and Home Office/YJB guidance for final warnings, referral orders, community penalties, DTOs (custody and post-custody) and ISSPs (where they exist).*
- ◇ *For those children and young people who have offended, enforcement follows non-compliance.*

We were impressed with the effort that staff put into the preparation of work with children and young people who had offended. Most of the interventions were delivered on a one-to-one basis, usually at the home of the child or young person. Case workers worked with children and young people very much on an individual basis and there was little evidence of sharing of experience or best practice, across or within the teams. Apart from the parenting groups, there was little group work, with no offending-behaviour group operating in any of the divisional teams. In large measure, this could be explained by the geographical spread of the area that made group and office based interventions very difficult to organise.

Supervision plans were completed, but not reviewed. Therefore work conducted was based on the initial assessment. Only 50% of the supervision plans were considered satisfactory in relation to timescale and quality. There was a good fit between the assessments made and interventions planned in 66% of cases and interventions were carried out in 59%.

Final warnings were not being delivered in accordance with national guidance. With no access to PNC data and the lack of formal mechanisms for information exchange between the police and the YOS police officers, the transfer of information in respect of final warnings was poor. We found from the case file sample that the police notified the YOS within one working day of the decision to issue a final warning in only 67% of cases. Victims were invited to become involved in the process in 100% of cases, but none did so, although in 11 of the cases examined, three had received letters of apology. The YOS assessment was carried out within ten days of

notification in only 60% of cases, and the YOS informed the police of the assessment within the national standard of 15 working days in 75% of cases. Final warnings were delivered within the required 20 days apparent in 88% of cases, but only 60% of the cases analysed included an intervention.

Referral order panels and restorative justice work were also conducted on a divisional basis and therefore there were variations apparent in their delivery. Generally, across the whole area, the referral panels sat within the required timescale of 20 working days in 63% of cases, with a 100% achievement of written reports being prepared for the panel. Victims were invited to attend panel meetings in 71% of cases, but none actually did so and only 33% were consulted or involved in restorative justice work with the child or young person. It was ascertained from the case file sample that 63% of the referral order contracts were delivered in accordance with the agreed requirements.

Breach procedures across the area were inconsistent and were reflective of the way in which practice in the divisional teams was dependant upon the different approaches of the divisional operational managers. This caused particular tension within the ISSP, which although centrally managed, had to accommodate the variations in approach between the three divisional operational managers. This situation required attention. Appointments were arranged in 64% of the case file sample and in 59% of those the appointments were kept. The judgements made about the acceptability of absence were considered acceptable in 76% of cases and breach taken in 56% of cases. Again this reflected the different practice in the three divisional teams and mirrored the different approaches of the divisional operational managers.

The education staff seconded to the YOS operated in a generic way as did the other YOS officers. There were, therefore, effectively no specifically targeted specialist education officers in the YOS. Similarly, the three Connexions personal advisers, who had been seconded to the YOS, were based in each of the divisional teams and concentrated, in the main, on final warning and referral order programmes. They, therefore, did not have a specific focus on ETE issues and did not make best use of their specialist skills as Connexions staff.

What was apparent though, was the awareness of all YOS staff about education issues within their division. 72% of cases examined in the file read identified that the child or young person had experienced difficulties at school, and of those, action had been taken to address the difficulties in 71%. The largest area of difficulty identified was temporary exclusion followed by truancy. However, the action taken was deemed to be fully or largely effective in only 36% of cases. The main difficulty facing the YOS in taking work on education issues forward appeared to be the lack of provision.

It was clear that the YOS was attempting to provide appropriate responses to children's and young people's educational and training needs. ESF funding had been secured to develop a programme called 'Fair Deal for the

Excluded', that was designed to bring children and young people into a training and learning environment prior to accessing mainstream provision. A flexible course of six weeks was offered in each of the three YOS divisions, to 13-15 year olds who had been excluded and to 16-19 year olds not in ETE. The YOS was also developing the use of the ASDAN award to build children's and young people's key skills. These initiatives would be better supported, in our view, by the redeployment of the education and Connexions staff as specialist workers.

As with the education and Connexions workers, the health workers in the YOS also held generic caseloads and again we questioned whether this was the most appropriate use of their specialist skills. The seconded health workers were based within the divisional teams with little reference to their parent agency or the employing PCT. They generally provided a tier 1 or 2 service and occasionally, if the worker concerned was a CPN, a tier 3. They utilized a range of interventions, including group work where appropriate. Some of the health workers were trained in psychiatry and were therefore able to draw on their own skills and experience to conduct full psychiatric assessments without the need for external referral to CAMHS. However, CAHMS was available and used if necessary.

We felt that more attention needed to be given by the YOS to the relationship between substance misuse and mental health issues. In addition the health service needed to be clear about how a tier 4 drug service would be provided. Alcohol-related offending and substance misuse were highly rated in the case file sample as contributory factors in criminal behaviour and were identified in 31% and 56%, respectively, of the cases read. In only 56% of these cases were the issues addressed.

Strength:

- ◆ Staff were enthusiastic, hard working and committed to service delivery.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Interventions were mainly limited to one-to-one work.
- ◆ Offending-behaviour programmes needed development.
- ◆ Enforcement needed attention to ensure consistent practice.
- ◆ The role of the education and health workers required review.

PARENTS/CARERS

Inspection criteria

- ◇ *Parents/carers (where appropriate) are made aware of the requirements of the interventions and are kept informed about progress during the course of the intervention.*
- ◇ *Interventions which are appropriate to the diverse needs of parents/carers are provided for, and taken up by parents/carers of children and young people who either have offended or are at risk of offending in accordance with assessed need.*

We were able to observe a parenting group during the course of the inspection that was well planned and organised. It operated as a rolling programme and the majority of the parents/carers were referred through the LEA. There was a joint review between the LEA and YOS staff after each session and again when the course was completed.

However, apart from the review of individual sessions and groups, no attempt was otherwise made to monitor the effectiveness of parenting work across the area. This was, in our view, regrettable and prevented the spread of good practice.

Individual work with parents/carers was conducted on a one-to-one basis as part of the formal supervision of children and young people subject to orders.

Strengths:

- ◇ Informal and formal contact with parents/carers was good.
- ◇ The parenting groups appeared well planned and organised.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ Good practice could be shared
- ◇ No area review or evaluation was conducted of the parenting groups.
- ◇ Practice was inconsistent across divisions.

2.3

Outcomes

Inspection criterion

- ◆ *Those assessed as being at risk of offending and undertaking interventions are engaged in activity to reduce their risk of offending and address their needs.*
- ◆ *For those children and young people who have offended examination of the case file provides evidence of progress and a reduction of risk factors.*
- ◆ *The YOT demonstrates a reduction in reoffending for all bands of penalties (pre-court, first tier, community penalties and custody).*
- ◆ *Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons show positive outcomes.*
- ◆ *For those children and young people who have offended, supervision plan objectives are met in areas of assessed need.*
- ◆ *Interventions for parents/carers promote effective parenting.*

Offending behaviour

The Youth Justice Plan update 2004/2005 recorded a reoffending rate of around 72% for the previous two years, based on the 2001 and 2002 cohorts of children and young people on community penalties. The reoffending rates for those receiving custodial sentences had, however, reduced from almost 92% in 2000 to 62.5% in 2002. First tier penalties also showed a reduction from 56% in 2000 to 54% in 2002.

The file read revealed that 80% of children and young people did not reoffend during the order and that 70% complied with the conditions of an order or licence. 62% of those files read showed improvement on the Asset score, generally in the area of 'thinking and behaviour', which was addressed in 40% of the cases read, and in 'perception of self and others' in 46%. Few of the interventions were, however, reviewed or evaluated and continued to be used without any analysis or evidence of their effectiveness.

Comments received from the children and young people during the course of the inspection were encouraging. Many made positive remarks about the support and intervention they had received, which they felt, had enabled them to change their attitudes and behaviours.

Parents/carers were similarly complimentary about the work of the YOS and the support and involvement offered to them as parents/carers. Again however, with no evaluation undertaken of the interventions, the comments were anecdotal rather than evidential.

The feedback we received from the victims contacted during the inspection was of a positive nature with victims expressing great appreciation for the contact and support given by the restorative justice workers.

Education

The YOS was not meeting the target of ensuring that 90% of the children and young people it supervised were in full-time ETE. The performance of the YOS deteriorated from 89.5% in 2002 to 83.1% in 2003, reducing to 77.6% in the last reporting quarter. However, improved recording of data had resulted in a more accurate picture and better understanding than was previously available. These improvements could be better sustained, in our view, by a more targeted use of the specialised services available.

Difficulties had been identified by the YOS in securing ETE places for children and young people and the need for a change in the culture of training providers to cater for the needs of children and young people who had offended had been recognised by the YOS. The three Pupil Referral Units focused solely on permanently excluded pupils. Finding suitable provision for other children and young people whose attendance was infrequent, but who were not permanently excluded (often prolific and persistent offenders) was problematic. Provision post-16 was described as variable in quality and appropriateness.

Health issues

The health staff in the YOS carried generic caseloads and as such were responsible for all aspects of Asset completion. Whilst the health workers did not view this as a particular difficulty, it was unclear whether this approach was compromising or causing delays in completion of the health assessments or other aspects of health work.

There was very little formal monitoring by the health and substance misuse workers of the impact of their interventions and it was therefore difficult to assess the effectiveness of their interventions.

Safeguarding

Five (11%) of the children and young people in the file read sample were in the looked after system and one (2%) was remanded to local authority care. For these children and young people, there was regular contact between the YOS and the social services department, and priority was given to their needs. It was good to see the YOS actively engaged with the social services department in relation to these vulnerable children and young people.

Liaison took place between the YOS and social services department in relation to other children in 39% of the cases examined. The file read showed that 14 (29%) were considered to be vulnerable to harm from self and nine (20%) from others. One child was on the child protection register. Appropriate action was taken in 76% of these cases.

Strengths:

- ◆ The reduction in reoffending during the involvement of the YOS was good.
- ◆ Parental satisfaction was high.

- ◆ Health and education involvement in the assessment process was generally adequate, although there were limitations in provision for specialist services available following referral.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The YOS did not use the 'What do you think' forms in all cases and this could be addressed further in order to clarify feedback from children and young people.
- ◆ The scale and size of the geographic area of Cumbria, and the management structure of the YOS, led to inconsistency of practice in the three divisions of the YOS.
- ◆ There should be more rigorous evaluation and monitoring of effectiveness.

**Good
practice**

The post of Operational Manager for Projects and Development was considered to be a positive way forward for the future development of work in prevention and effective practice.

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

This section is judged as satisfactorily met.

3.

VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

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

Inspection criteria

- ◇ *An assessment of victims' needs should be made and used to inform planned interventions.*
- ◇ *All victims are given the opportunity to make informed decisions about their involvement in cases of children and young people who have offended and are supported in doing so.*

There were three restorative justice workers in the YOS who had responsibility for victim contact. They were employed by the Cumbria Constabulary, although paid for from the YOS budget. These arrangements had been set up to enable the workers to contact victims directly on behalf of the police, thus preventing a breach of the Data Protection Act (1998).

Referrals were received from case workers who determined the priority of each individual case. Due to the high volume of cases and lack of resources, the restorative justice workers managed their workload by sending a letter to the victims deemed low priority, inviting them to make contact with the YOS. Those considered a high priority were offered a home visit that was then used to assess further the victim's wish for support services.

The restorative justice workers attempted to contact all known victims and reportedly dealt with about 36 victims per week. Of these, a more detailed service was offered in around 50% of cases. According to our file read, 32% of victims were consulted about reparation or restorative justice work with the child or young person and 40% were invited to participate in such work. 16% of children and young people made direct reparation and 23% indirect reparation.

In view of the demand, the restorative justice workers were in the process of training case workers to undertake support to victims after the initial restorative justice contact and assessment. Currently the restorative justice workers would refer victims to Victim Support or witness services if counselling or more planned interventions were needed. Whilst sympathetic to the intention, we felt that the further involvement of the case workers in this area of work could result in the duplication of the existing service and that their attentions would be better directed in greater involvement in restorative justice work.

Strength:

- ◇ The YOS attempted to contact all victims.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ YOS police officers did not have access to the PNC from the divisional teams.
- ◇ More training in diversity issues was required for volunteers and restorative justice workers.

3.2 Restorative interventions with the victims of children and young people who have offended

Inspection criteria

- ◇ *Victims have access to a restorative intervention tailored to their needs.*
- ◇ *Victims are offered the opportunity to specify any reparative element of the child's or young person's supervision plan and to be informed of their progress.*
- ◇ *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.*

The Volunteer Coordinator dealt with reparation work as well as referral panel and mentoring work (to be formally launched in January 2005). There was a mentoring policy in place, but this was entirely dependent upon the divisional-based interpretation. Some members of staff, with whom we spoke, had received restorative justice training but felt that they had been unable to use these skills creatively.

When determining the demand for direct victim reparation work in relation to restorative justice interventions, the views of the community were represented by a community police officer. Appropriate interventions were delivered and took account of race, gender, language, literacy and disability. We were told of an example of young person with a hearing impairment who undertook indirect reparation with the assistance of individual supervision from a restorative justice worker. Other indirect reparation was delivered using charity shops, conservation groups, graffiti removal, and volunteers were trained to help supervise the children and young people who had offended.

As part of the restorative justice work a number of letters of apology were forwarded to victims and we saw evidence from one victim that expressed satisfaction with the outcome and felt fully informed of the stages of the process.

However, there were a limited number of victims attending panels and the file read showed that, although the YOS was proactively inviting participation, actual attendance was low. As a result, examples of direct involvement by victims in specifying reparation were limited.

Strengths:

- ◆ Victim awareness and satisfaction was high.
- ◆ Referral panels and courts received statements from victims.
- ◆ Representation of both the victim's and the community's view was enhanced through the work of the community police officers.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ The number of victims attending panels was low.

3.3 Restorative outcomes for victims of children and young people who have offended

Inspection criterion

- ◆ Victims are satisfied with the work undertaken by the YOS.

We spoke to a number of people affected by crime. All were generally satisfied with the way in which they had been kept up to date with information from the YOS and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the work of the YOS.

Victim satisfaction returns provided to the YJB illustrated that people affected by crime were largely satisfied with the YOS in relation to victim work, although occasions of direct restorative outcomes were limited. Victims were consulted during the referral panel and final warning processes in the same manner, and similar satisfaction levels were expressed.

Strength:

- ◆ Victims interviewed were generally satisfied with the work of the YOS in relation to outcomes.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ Restorative justice and victim training for staff should be developed, and the staff already trained should be encouraged and supported in using these skills.

3.4

Restorative and reparative outcomes for children and young people who have offended

Inspection criteria

- ◇ *Children and young people involved in restorative interventions make a positive contribution to the victim and community.*

There were a limited number of children and young people meeting with victims of crime and this detracted from the overall contribution to the community. Most reparation was conducted indirectly. Victim work was occasionally left towards the end of planned interventions and often conducted on a one-to-one basis with little group work. However, the YOS had engaged a number of children and young people in writing letters of apology to victims. We also heard of examples of links made with schools to promote awareness of the impact of crime on victims.

Strength:

- ◇ A range of indirect reparation opportunities for children and young people was provided.

Area for improvement:

- ◇ Greater attention could be given to direct reparation and restorative interventions to victims from minority ethnic groups.

Good practice

The victims in contact with the YOS expressed great satisfaction with the support received and with work undertaken by the children and young people.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This section is judged as satisfactorily met.

The joint inspection of YOTs

The Government announced the establishment of an independent inspection of YOTs in December 2002. The inspection programme is to be conducted jointly by CSCI, Estyn, the Healthcare Commission, HMIC, HMI Prisons, HMI Probation, Ofsted and SSIW. The joint inspection team is located within and led by HMI Probation, and is funded by the Home Office.

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 our scrutiny of work to address drug and other substance misuse, and to other relevant CJS 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.

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*

Inspection arrangements

- ◇ The joint inspection programme started in September 2003, following two pilot inspections. All 155 YOTs in England and Wales are to be inspected over a five to six year cycle. As this was a long programme, we decided from the outset to break it down into three phases in order to ensure that the inspection retained its relevance and continued to address local and national concerns.
- ◇ The three phases are:
 - **from September 2003 to July 2004**, when the inspection concentrated on key issues, with emphasis placed on establishing benchmarks and the dissemination of good practice. Fifteen YOTs were inspected during this phase of the programme, all of whom were volunteers.
 - **the current phase, up to September 2005**, when the inspection process will be based on the methodology established in the first phase. In so far as possible, fieldwork will be individually tailored to each YOT, informed by examination of the data available and the findings from other inspection programmes
 - **from September 2005 onwards**, when the YOT inspection methodology will be congruent with the five outcomes in the Children's Services inspection framework and complement that of the Joint Area Reviews in England. Although the YOT inspection will remain a separate process, inspections will run within a similar timeframe as the Joint Area Reviews where possible, so that areas of potential overlap and duplication can be reduced and rationalised. Findings from the YOT inspection will, therefore, inform not only the Joint Area Review but also the Annual Performance Assessment and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Work is currently being undertaken to ensure that this process is compatible with the different governance arrangements in Wales.
- ◇ The inspection will be carried out in line with the Government's commitment to proportionate and coordinated inspection in local government. It will:
 - be proportionate to risk, and fieldwork will only be undertaken where necessary to support findings or to disseminate good practice
 - complement, and be coordinated with other inspection programmes, including the Joint Area Reviews and comparable inspection processes in Wales
 - take account of YOTs' recent development as organisations.
- ◇ The standards and criteria developed for the first phase of the inspection have been slightly modified and focus on:
 - management and partnership arrangements
 - work with children and young people and their parents/carers
 - victims and restorative justice.

- ◆ The fieldwork for each individual inspection will take place over two weeks, about two to three weeks apart. The first week will consist of a file reading exercise for which the YOT will be asked to identify a random sample of between 30 and 80 children and young people (dependent on the workload) who have been subject to some form of intervention in the previous months. The cases will cover most orders, including licences.
- ◆ These case files will be examined in detail. In half the cases selected, we will also undertake in-depth interviews with the case manager, any other person significantly involved in delivering the intervention and, where possible, the child or young person themselves and their parents/carers. Where appropriate, we also hope to meet and hear from victims of crimes by children and young people supervised by the YOT.
- ◆ 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, to the inspection team for the duration of the file reading week. We have found this to be a positive way of developing mutual understanding and strengthening the links between inspection and practice.
- ◆ As before, the second week of the inspection will involve meetings with the Chief Executive, Management Board members, YOT Manager and staff. It will cover the management of the YOT, its performance and the contribution made by its partner organisations. Discussions will be informed by the findings of the examination of case files conducted in the first week of inspection.
- ◆ The inspection findings will be compiled in a report which will include 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 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, and where relevant, the Ministers for Education & Lifelong Learning, Finance, Local Government & Communities, and Health & Social Services in Wales. 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.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/probation/inspprob>

Scoring approach

We have decided to continue a similar approach to scoring in phase two as in phase one, in order to allow some broad comparisons of performance, but with certain provisos. First of all, it should be noted that this second phase of the inspection covers only three core areas, rather than five as in the first phase. In addition, as part of our aim of continually improving performance, two of the categorisations, 'good' and 'good basis for development' (formerly described as 'satisfactory with good basis for development'), have been amended, and whilst exacting a more rigorous standard of performance from the YOT also, we believe, allow for better representation of their actual achievements.

The three sections of the inspection will be individually assessed against the relevant standards, using the supporting criteria. Judgements will be 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
- ◆ other relevant inspection findings.

The judgements are 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.

Some discretion is allowed to lead inspectors for scores to be adjusted if this seems appropriate due to other findings or contextual evidence.

The overall assessment will be determined by the judgements of the individual sections. As in the first phase of the inspection process, no score or grading will be given during this second phase, but instead a general categorisation highlighting particular achievements as well as areas for improvement. This approach was initially adopted as we felt that a more rigid scoring mechanism would be inappropriate given the developmental nature of much of the work of the YOTs and their relatively recent inauguration as organisations.

The overall performance of the YOT will be assessed as:

- ◆ **Commendable** – there is strong management performance and exemplary work with both children and young people and in relation to victims and restorative justice. These YOTs will be setting a standard of excellence which will act as an example to others.
- ◆ **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. YOTs within this category will have addressed most, if not all, key areas of work and be achieving a high standard of performance.
- ◆ **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. Although some key areas will still require attention, these YOTs will have demonstrated good potential and their work will be sufficient to promote confidence in their future development.
- ◆ **Requiring improvement** – either the section on management arrangements or work with children and young people is assessed as partly or not met. In these instances, the inspection will have revealed concerns about key aspects of the YOT's performance which need to be addressed.
- ◆ **Requiring significant improvement** – neither the section on management arrangements or work with children and young people is considered to have been satisfactorily met. YOTs within this category will need to take immediate action to address major concerns about core areas of work.

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.
- ◆ Implementation of the recommendations will be monitored by the YJB. 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 Cumbria YOS has not revealed any such concerns.
- ◆ In addition to the reports on individual YOTs, the joint inspection team will also publish periodic reports on findings across a number of teams. Such reports will include comments on race equality and diversity issues and other trend information. These reports will also include comparisons between the performance of YOTs with similar characteristics.