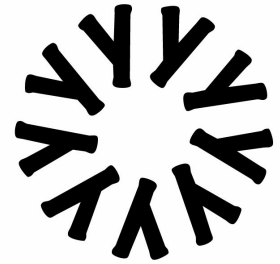


*Audit Commission  
Commission for Social Care Inspection  
Estyn  
Healthcare Commission  
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
HM Inspectorate of Probation  
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# Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:  
Havering  
Youth Offending Team

2004

## Foreword

This is one of the first phase of reports to be published on the inspection of Youth Offending Teams across England and Wales. We found a team that was delivering some good practice in their work with children and young people who had offended and were successful in meeting national standards. The team was supported by good local management and had systems in place to ensure a regular focus on achieving high-quality service delivery.

We also found areas for improvement. Although some relate to practice within the Youth Offending Team, the majority are located in the management and partnership arrangements. The most pressing of these was the shortfall in staff numbers at the Youth Offending Team which had been subject to discussion for sometime, but had remained unresolved. This was having a clear impact on the team. In addition, there was a need for greater strategic direction from the Steering Group and the appropriate representation of statutory partners.

Our overall assessment of the Havering Youth Offending Team's performance was that it was satisfactory with a good basis for development. This report contains a number of recommendations, which we believe will assist the Youth Offending Team to move these matters forward. We are confident that it will make progress in addressing them.

*Andrew Bridges*  
*HM Chief Inspector of Probation*

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## Glossary

ASSET	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
COG	Chief Officers' Group
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
DAT	Drug Action Team
DTO	Detention Training Order
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
ISP	Initial Supervision Plan
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
LEA	Local Education Authority
MAPPP	Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PSR	Pre-Sentence Report
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SSI	Social Services Inspectorate
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
YISP	Youth Inclusion Support Panel
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOI	Young Offenders Institution
YOT	Youth Offending Team

## Introduction

The past three years, from the implementation of the national youth justice reforms in April 2000, have seen significant change. YOTs have been established across England and Wales. New orders and interventions have been introduced, a common assessment system developed and greater emphasis given to a range of approaches, including prevention work, restorative justice and the needs of victims. Much has been achieved.

This is the first full inspection programme to examine this new area of work. It is accepted that YOTs will have evolved at varying rates, reflecting local circumstances and need. As far as possible, the inspection methodology and scoring have been designed to take account of their different stages of development.

Emphasis has been placed on two core areas:

- ◆ the management and partnership arrangements, including the role and functioning of the local board
- ◆ work with children and young people who offend.

These sections are essential to satisfactory and sustainable performance. Other areas covered by the inspection are the prevention of offending, work with parents/carers and work with victims.

At this stage we expect only few YOTs to be performing satisfactorily across each of the five sections covered by the inspection, but that most will have sound management arrangements and established good working practices with children and young people who offend.

## **Key findings**

### ***Management and partnership arrangements***

- ◇ The COG met on a regular and frequent basis, but was not constructed in a way that enabled it to make strategic decisions.
- ◇ The YOT Manager was well integrated into a wide range of strategic groups.
- ◇ The only partners to second staff directly to the YOT were Connexions, the police service and the health service. All other staff were either directly employed by the YOT or recruited from agencies.
- ◇ Some specialist staff undertook a considerable amount of core work and were consequently, at times, deflected from their professional role.
- ◇ Regular practice and gatekeeping meetings focused on identifying high-quality work.

### ***Children and young people at risk of offending***

- ◇ A range of interventions was available, or planned, based on a consultation exercise to which children and young people had contributed.
- ◇ Although the team attempted to tailor programmes to individuals, there was only a limited range of specific reparation interventions available for girls and young women, and none for children and young people from minority ethnic groups.

### ***Children and young people who offend***

- ◇ Performance across many of the national standards, particularly initial assessments and enforcement, was very good.
- ◇ Supervision plans were prepared in all cases but lacked sufficient detail to enable easy monitoring of progress.
- ◇ The team made significant use of individual counselling based on cognitive development to address offending behaviour, but did not run any groups on thinking skills.
- ◇ A number of other group work programmes were available but were currently not being used. Reasons given included lack of referrals and pressure of other work.
- ◇ The work of the YOT was viewed very positively by the courts and by the children and young people supervised.

### **Work with parents/carers**

- ◇ Little formal parenting work had been undertaken.
- ◇ Where work had taken place, parents/carers had had a very positive experience of engagement with the YOT.
- ◇ Interventions were based on identified need.

### **Work with victims**

- ◇ The Metropolitan Police's approach to victim contact limited the YOT's ability to engage with victims in a meaningful way.
- ◇ Victims who had engaged with the YOT were satisfied with their experience.
- ◇ Good reference was made to victims' views in many court and referral panel reports.

### **Overall assessment**

The overall performance of the Havering YOT was assessed as **satisfactory with good basis for development**.

We found a lively, supportive and committed team of staff, many of whom had been in post for three years. Good practice was evident in the overall approach by the managers and the team worked hard on core assessments and interventions with children and young people who had offended.

There was evidence of good work with some parents/carers and victims, but the numbers involved were very small. These areas needed to be developed to enable far more people to benefit.

A key issue of concern was that of resources. There was broad agreement that the team was under-resourced. At the same time, core performance was very good. However, this seemed to mask difficulties with both specialist work and new developments. The matter had been discussed at the COG on several occasions but despite agreement that there was a problem, no solution had been put in place. As a result, the specialist work was not being fully developed in several key areas and the situation was beginning to have an impact on staff morale. This issue needed to be addressed.

## Recommendations

*The Chair of the COG 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
- ◇ a review of the COG's structure, role and functioning is undertaken and appropriate action implemented to assist the group in meeting its duties and performing its strategic role
- ◇ all partners meet the statutory requirements placed upon them to second staff to the YOT
- ◇ the expertise of specialist staff seconded to the YOT is deployed effectively to meet the needs of the children and young people.

*The YOT Manager should ensure that:*

- ◇ the quality of supervision plans is improved to meet the requirements of national standards and assist case managers in planning and reviewing work with children and young people
- ◇ the development of group work provision to address the general offending behaviour of children and young people is explored as an effective supplement to work undertaken on an individual basis
- ◇ a strategy for working with parents/carers, on either an individual or group basis, prioritised according to assessed need, is implemented and reviewed.

*The YOT Manager and the Metropolitan Police should ensure that:*

- ◇ the informed consent of victims for their involvement in the restorative process is sought in accordance with national guidelines.

## Overview

- ◆ Havering is the second largest London borough with a relatively stable level of population of 230,000 in over 94,000 households living in an area of 46 square miles, half of which is green belt (Census 2001). Two colleges and 18 secondary schools provide education services for 16,300, ten-17 years olds.
- ◆ It borders the county of Essex to the north and east, the neighbouring London boroughs of Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham to the west and the River Thames to the south. Havering grew considerably after the second world war with many of the population migrating from inner London into areas such as Harold Hill – the largest post-war estate in Europe. However, whilst neighbouring boroughs continue to attract immigrants from elsewhere, Havering differs considerably by a distinct lack of cultural diversity and has a black and minority ethnic population of 4.8%, which includes few asylum seekers and even fewer travellers.
- ◆ The borough is regarded as an affluent suburban area with only limited pockets of social deprivation – a situation that excludes it from many government and European funding sources. However it is, in common with many other metropolitan authorities, severely constrained in finding additional resources to tackle problem areas such as youth crime.
- ◆ Havering has one of the lowest crime rates in London. Retail and vehicle theft are the primary offences during daytime linked directly to its attraction as a shopping and commuter area, whereas many of the night-time offences are drink related, such as public disorder, vandalism and violence against the person.
- ◆ YJB figures show that during 2002, 858 children and young people were arrested and accounted for over 1400 offences being committed. 85% of offenders were male, with the peak age of offending, for both sexes, was 16-17. Youth crime follows the classic pattern of being relatively stable up to the age of 13, whereupon it rises steeply between the ages of 13-17. The YOT assessment of the 'ethnic appearance' of suspects revealed that 89% were classified as white. Crime figures indicate that children and young people committed 26% of crime, compared to 23% nationally.

	<b>No. offences in Havering</b>	<b>Average per YOT for England and Wales</b>
Violence against person	83	222
Racially aggravated offences	1	9
Sexual offences	2	11
Death or injury by reckless driving	0	0.8
Motoring offences	250	394
Robbery	10	30
Domestic burglary	9	50
Non-domestic burglary	38	36
Vehicle theft	74	97
Theft and handling	148	305
Fraud and forgery	21	19
Arson	5	9
Criminal damage	50	175
Drugs offences	96	85
Public order	53	113
Other	14	61
Breach of conditional discharge	2	9
Breach of statutory order	41	52
Breach of bail	3	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1708.8</b>

# 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.*

The COG met on a regular basis – approximately six times per year. A decision had been made early in the life of the YOT, by a previous Chief Executive, to delegate the chairing of the group to the Director of Social Services and three people had held the post since then, the current Chair having been in post since December 2002. A similar delegation had more recently been put in place by the police, who were now represented by a Chief Inspector. The original Chief Executive had now left and his post had been covered on a temporary basis since January 2003.

The YOT Manager and Operational Manager regularly attended the COG, as did a lay representative from the referral order panel. However, it was apparent from the minutes of the meetings and from comments, that not all members attended regularly, although illness and a lack of cover within certain organisations explained some absences. Certain partner agencies were not always represented at a sufficiently senior grade to be able to make decisions without reference back to more senior colleagues.

The business of the COG seemed largely to be generated by the YOT Manager. The group received performance data from the YOT Manager on a regular basis and the general view was that this information was sufficient for their needs. The absence of an information officer required the YOT Manager to commit considerable time to ensuring that these reports were prepared. Despite this, returns to YJB were made in a timely manner. The Youth Justice Plan was approved by the COG and then signed off by the Chief Executive.

Good quality reports on other issues were prepared and circulated by the YOT Manager in advance of each meeting. The COG was supportive of the YOT Manager and, on the whole, accepted his proposals. However, key decisions, in particular those concerned with resources, whilst accepted by the COG, were not translated into funding. A view from the authority was that they had been responding to a poor SSI report from three years ago and there were many competing priorities. Clearly such a situation could pose conflicts of interest for many members of the COG and it was unclear who was actively supporting the YOT's position.

There were mixed views from COG members as to how far the group operated strategically. Several regular attendees felt that, on the whole, it offered support rather than strategic direction and leadership. Other members indicated that there was a need for the COG to take time to review its performance. Whilst this issue had been raised, the group had not been able to prioritise it.

**Strengths:**

- ◆ The COG met on a regular and frequent basis.
- ◆ A member of the referral panel was included in the COG.

**Areas for improvement:**

- ◆ Authority for key decisions did not seem to rest with the COG.
- ◆ Business could be frustrated by inconsistent attendance.
- ◆ Planning had not been prioritised by the COG.

## 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 offend 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 majority of interventions were delivered in-house, although there were an increasing number of partnership providers within Havering, to which

the YOT contributed by management support, funding and referral. These included a car crime reduction project, which had been in existence for several years and a YISP, which was formed in February 2004.

The YOT Manager and several members of the COG sat on a range of multi-agency groups, in particular the Community Safety Partnership and the DAT. This helped to ensure consistency across the different plans produced.

The Operational Manager was also a member of MAPPP and as such was well integrated into the wider risk management arena. She was also properly placed to ensure that children and young people, about whom there was concern, were thoroughly considered at the correct level within the area. This role supported the work being undertaken with staff to improve awareness of the issues and procedures around risk of harm work.

There were several protocols in place with partners. These seemed thorough and provided a reasonable platform for monitoring and development.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a requirement on organisations to second staff to YOTs. The only partners currently to assign staff to the Havering YOT were Connexions, the police service and the health service. The police had, to their credit, recently decided to allocate a second police officer to the YOT, although a pan-London advert had met with no response. All other staff were either directly employed or recruited from agencies. The probation service had not seconded a probation officer since the inception of the YOT, despite recently re-advertising. Although they had provided funding which enabled a locum worker to be taken on, this situation was unsatisfactory, particularly as other YOTs within the same division had probation secondees. A social worker had initially been seconded, but following promotion, had been replaced by an unqualified worker. In 2000, the salary costs for a specialist education post were vired permanently from the LEA budget to that of the Social Services Department. This had been increased year on year in-line with inflation. Although the education funding was pooled with the Social Services Department in this way, it was shown separately within the YOT annual plan. This reflected that the education authority was actively supporting the YOT by the provision of appropriate staff, albeit by an unusual route.

The issue of resources was a key one for Havering. The team had the same level of core staff as when first established and there was broad agreement that it was now under-resourced. Specialist staff from, for example, health and education had therefore increasingly been used to take on core work in order to meet national standards and the overall standard of performance had remained good. This solution, whilst undoubtedly effective in terms of short-term expediency, masked difficulties as it not only inhibited innovation, but also affected the ability of specialist staff to complete their proper function, thus reducing the overall impact of the YOT as a whole. The situation was beginning to have an effect on staff morale and it was becoming apparent that the YOT could have difficulty in retaining some of its existing high-calibre staff.

### **Strengths:**

- ◆ The YOT Manager was well integrated across a wide range of strategic groups.
- ◆ The Youth Justice Plan reflected partner strategies.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- ◆ Protocols with partner providers were not routinely prepared and reviewed.
- ◆ Seconded arrangements needed reviewing.
- ◆ Specialist staff were routinely deployed on core work.

## **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 criminal record check.*
- ◆ *Volunteers are appropriately trained, available for YOT activities and have had a criminal record check.*
- ◆ *Joint agreements are in place for the management of disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures.*
- ◆ *Complaints are properly managed.*

All staff reported having regular supervision which was timetabled and recorded. There was no policy on appraisals, although one was being drawn up. No appraisals had yet been prepared, apart from on the staff member recruited through the modern apprenticeship scheme. The Operational Manager adopted an open-door policy and we saw many informal discussions about cases. These were further supplemented by the weekly team, practice and gatekeeping meetings which, whilst time consuming, were focused on ensuring high-quality work. The Operational Manager was clear that she used all of these processes to ensure she had oversight of workloads and individual performance and staff agreed with this view.

Much training about core procedures, such as use of the IT system and ASSET, was conducted in-house, by observation, shadowing and through supervision. In addition, a range of courses was available to staff from other organisations. The team managers were positive in supporting

training applications, but were honest in admitting that freeing staff up to attend was difficult given the potential impact on core work. Individuals' experience of induction varied, but we were told that an induction pack was in preparation.

There has been no consistent approach to diversity training or child protection awareness. This was an issue across the local authority and the Chair of the COG was also Chair of the local authority Equal Opportunities Group. She described Havering as still having some way to go in meeting the desired standard in race and other diversity awareness. The Equal Opportunities Group was working on identifying appropriate training for all staff within the local authority.

The YOT Manager was keen that staff should have the opportunity to undertake YJB training in the coming year. However, the time requirement was such that he felt that he would not be able to maintain services if all eligible staff wished to attend.

There were no joint agreements for managing grievance or disciplinary matters where these occur between staff seconded from different agencies. Use would be made of the local authority's procedures as far as possible.

There was a written complaints procedure and a bright, colourful feedback form was readily available in the waiting room. The YOT Manager checked all completed forms.

All staff and volunteers had been subject to the relevant criminal record checks at the start of their work with the YOT.

***Strengths:***

- ◆ Regular, recorded supervision sessions were in place for all staff.
- ◆ There were regular practice and gatekeeping meetings held, focused on identifying high-quality work.

***Areas for improvement:***

- ◆ No appraisals had been written.
- ◆ There was an inconsistent induction process.

**Good practice**

All staff interviewed were committed to the regular practice and gatekeeping meeting, despite acknowledging that these are sometimes very difficult because colleagues were willing to make honest criticism.

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

***This section is judged as satisfactorily met.***

## 2. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

### 2.1 Assessment of those 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.*

Within Havering, work on early prevention of offending was based on a borough wide approach, led by the Community Safety Partnership and the DAT. The YOT contributed to this area of work by the YOT Manager's membership of the various groups addressing the issue and the use of the Children's Fund monies to establish new preventative projects.

A new YISP started during the course of the inspection. This scheme was hosted by the YOT with funding from the Children's Fund. The YOT Manager was a member of the fund's main group and some of its sub-groups, thus ensuring good awareness between the COG and the other relevant groups.

#### **Strength:**

- ◇ The YOT Manager was fully involved in the range of groups responsible for progressing the preventative agenda.

### 2.2 Interventions for those at risk of offending

#### **Inspection criteria**

- ◇ *There are arrangements to provide interventions for those children and young people within the area who are assessed at risk of offending.*
- ◇ *The YOT has a methodology for measuring the effectiveness of preventative intervention programmes.*
- ◇ *Interventions are appropriate to the diverse needs of children and young people in the YOT area and take account of the need to safeguard children and young people.*
- ◇ *Interventions target the criminogenic needs of those at risk of offending.*

There was a reasonable range of facilities for those at risk of offending regardless of which agency identified them. The Manger of the Children's Fund had conducted a consultation event with children and young people to

help identify appropriate options. The YOT supported a number of these by funding, membership of management groups and/or referrals.

The YOT's drugs worker had developed a series of awareness raising initiatives which were to be made available around schools. Some of these visits had taken place and had been judged as successful. The programme had not been completed, although it was hoped that it could be recommenced in the near future. Although the main reason given for its cessation was that the referrals from schools had stopped the worker responsible indicated that he would now have difficulty in promoting the group because of his increasing responsibility for other core areas of work.

There were links with organisations which work with children from minority ethnic groups, particularly travelling families and the Serbo-Croatian community. Whilst the YOT staff were clear that individualised placements could be found if required, there were no specific reparation work placements available for children and young people of minority ethnic backgrounds. In part, this was due to small numbers, but we did hear comments which indicated a lack of awareness about the specific needs of minority groups.

#### **Strengths:**

- ◆ A range of interventions were available or planned, based on a needs analysis to which children and young people had contributed.
- ◆ The drugs awareness initiative.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- ◆ Some preventative work appeared to have been lost because of the pressures on staff to meet the demands of core work.
- ◆ Programmes of work which are designed to address specific needs of minority groups.

### **2.3 Outcomes for those at risk of offending**

#### **Inspection criterion**

- ◆ *Those assessed as being at risk of offending and undertaking interventions are engaged in activity to reduce their risk of offending.*

The range of provision available allowed for some targeting, which was most likely to ensure that criminogenic need is addressed. However, there was no mechanism available to measure risk reduction within this group of children and young people. It may be that the YISP will be able to develop some form of measurement.

#### **OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING**

***This section is judged as satisfactorily met.***

### 3.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFFEND

### 3.1

#### Assessment of children and young people who offend

##### *Inspection criteria*

- ◇ *Comprehensive assessments of the needs of children and young people who have offended, are made at the intervals required by national standards and effective practice guidelines.*
- ◇ *Risk of harm to others is fully assessed.*
- ◇ *Risk of harm, either to self or from others, is fully assessed.*
- ◇ *Supervision plans are written in accordance with national standards, emanate from ASSET and contain SMART objectives.*
- ◇ *Assessments to address criminogenic needs, such as health and ETE, and take account of cultural difference, diversity and safeguarding children and young people.*
- ◇ *ASSET is updated in accordance with national standards and effective practice guidelines at relevant times during contact with the child or young person.*
- ◇ *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.*

Having YOT scored well in terms of ASSET completion, with 94% of initial assessments being at least 'largely met'. Parents/carers were involved in all cases and ASSETs were reviewed and updated in a timely manner. There was some inconsistency in the amount and quality of information recorded to support the scoring of each section, which was sometimes a little thin.

Assessments of risk of harm to others were not consistently completed and it was difficult to find evidence of management oversight in those cases which were identified as risk concern/aware. There was considerable reference to these cases being discussed with managers at the weekly practice meeting and some record in the minutes of that meeting helped to allay concerns about managerial oversight. However, the individual case record did not fully reflect this activity. This is an area of work which should be a priority for all staff.

Risk of harm to self and vulnerability were well assessed. This was at least in part because of the presence of the seconded nurse within the team, as she was qualified to undertake mental health assessments. In addition, the team's drugs and education workers also undertook specialist assessments as required. We were concerned, however, that a backlog had built up in

recording specialist assessments because of the demands of the core work. The specialist workers had all been in post for sometime and had very good networks within their home organisation. This enabled them to make referrals for specialist interventions very effectively. However, the delay in recording these assessments meant that the system was fragile and difficult to cover in case of absence of the established worker.

ISPs were available in all cases, but were not sufficiently well recorded. In some instances, reference was made to the outline plan within the PSR. This practice does not provide sufficient detail with which to track progress and change, thus weakening the ability of the case manager to review and plan ahead.

We interviewed six children and young people who had been supervised by the YOT and had information from 11 more via the use of an interactive CD-ROM designed to gather their opinions. Their comments indicated a high rate of involvement in the assessment and planning process. A general question, asking the children and young people interviewed to rate the YOT on a scale of one to ten, resulted in an average of eight.

A major concern within the team and the COG was the amount of general core work (such as ASSET) undertaken by specialist staff, which we were told, had reached such a level that they were unable to conduct their specialist function properly. Whilst the deployment of specialist staff on core tasks ensured that the key assessments were completed and work could be planned, it was evident that, without full preparation of specialist assessments, some children and young people could be disadvantaged.

### **Strengths:**

- ◆ Very good performance against the national standards for initial assessments.
- ◆ High level of children and young peoples' involvement.
- ◆ Very good access to CAHMS.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- ◆ The quality of evidence recorded in ASSET used to support the scoring.
- ◆ Recording of the ISP, particularly in relation to risk of harm issues.
- ◆ The role and purpose of specialist workers had become unclear.

## **Good practice**

The YOT's Adolescent Counsellor was invited to meet the Prime Minister to explain what was involved in his work, following publicity about one case where he had used cognitive therapy with a young man convicted of an offence of violence.

## 3.2

### Interventions for children and young people who offend

#### ***Inspection criteria***

- ◇ *Interventions are:*
  - *targeted in areas of assessed need such as education, health and parental relationships, etc*
  - *provided that are specific to the needs and offending behaviour of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups, those with disabilities and take account of safeguarding children and young people*
  - *consistent with the principles of effective practice.*
- ◇ *Frequency of appointments 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).*
- ◇ *Enforcement follows non-compliance.*

The YOT made significant use of individual counselling based on cognitive development, to address general offending behaviour. Other, more specific interventions were available for substance abuse, those under 16 who were out of education or with mental health problems. The team also had access to a wider range of interventions from outside provision, although these resources did not appear to be utilised fully. Greater emphasis could be placed on raising awareness of the impact of the offence on the victim.

The YOT had access to a number of group work programmes, several of which had been run in the past. The absence of group work around the time of the inspection was generally attributed to the small numbers of offenders for any particular topic, but we also heard comments from staff about the demands of running such groups and the lack of available time. Little consideration had been given to developing some form of group work based on the general thinking skills programme as a cost-effective alternative. Such an approach would also be in keeping with the team's emphasis on cognitive development.

The approach of working largely on a one-to-one basis did, however, allow for tailoring interventions to address specific needs. A young woman from Eastern Europe and for who English was a second language, was provided with a translator throughout her involvement with the YOT. We were able to confirm that this was standard practice. The parents/carers interviewed all indicated that the YOT staff had paid proper attention to any particular individual needs.

Havering had a very low rate of use of custody for children and young people. There had been some difficulties in achieving the target for post-sentence planning meetings because of problems getting timely appointments in the YOIs. However, the work that had been planned appeared to be appropriate and the linkage between custody and community based work seemed sound.

The Connexions Personal Advisors and the specialist education worker were working collaboratively to address the education and employment needs of children and young people who had offended. However, the lack of both places in mainstream education and alternative education programmes was a concern.

Havering YOT scored very well in terms of frequency of appointments set, with over 90% cases being in-line with the national standard requirements. This was complemented by good compliance management and appropriate breach action against those who failed. In particular, we found that staff showed sound judgement in determining the acceptability or otherwise of the reasons given for failing to attend in 87% of those cases examined. Children and young people interviewed could describe the requirements placed on them and knew what would happen if they failed to attend.

The Chair of the Youth Panel was very congratulatory on this point, and indicated a local culture of seeking where possible, to enable those who had breached to continue working with the YOT, signalling the court's confidence in the YOT.

The feedback from children and young people indicated that YOT staff did what they said they would, listened well and treated the children and young people with respect.

#### **Strengths:**

- ◆ Excellent performance against national standards, particularly enforcement.
- ◆ The work of the YOT was viewed very positively by the courts and by the children and young people supervised.
- ◆ The number of assessments for, and interventions with, those subject to final warnings has increased substantially.
- ◆ The YOT Manager actively promoted positive accounts of the team's work.

### **3.3 Outcomes for work with children and young people who offend**

#### **Inspection criteria**

- ◆ *The area demonstrates a reduction in reoffending for all bands of penalties (pre-court, first tier, community penalties and custody).*
- ◆ *End ASSETs show a reduction in risk factors.*
- ◆ *Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons show positive outcomes.*
- ◆ *Supervision plan objectives are met in areas of assessed need.*

Indicative targets for reoffending, as determined by police figures, did demonstrate a reduction, although this figure was subject to a number of influences, which made it difficult to interpret as being a direct result of the YOT's work.

The use of ASSET scores at the start and finish of an order did indicate, in broad terms, a reduction in risk levels. However, it was important to recognise that ASSET scores could vary considerably as the worker's knowledge of the child and young person increased during the course of the order.

Many of the reviews lacked thoroughness, reflecting the already mentioned poor quality of the supervision plans themselves and gave little indication of the progress achieved. There was however, some indication from the case records indicating that problem areas had been addressed during supervision and where relevant, that reparation work had been carried out. There was also evidence that reoffending by those subject to a final warning with interventions had reduced from 30% to 12%.

The overwhelming view from all was that their engagement with YOT staff had been both understandable and useful and most importantly had had an impact on their offending behaviour.

**Good practice**

Comments made by children and young people included:

"I get to talk to someone who treats me like an adult and with respect. They have helped me to understand a lot about my offence. Also, I liked doing my reparation work because I gave something back."

"The people are very helpful because they have helped me understand what I have done and all the damage to the many victims."

**Strengths:**

- ◆ Very good outcomes indicated by children and young people.
- ◆ Specific needs taken account of.

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFFEND**

***This section is judged as satisfactorily met.***

## 4.

## WORK WITH PARENTS/CARERS

### 4.1 Assessment of the needs of parents/carers of children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending

#### *Inspection criterion*

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

Like many YOTs, Havering had made few recommendations for parenting orders, preferring to work with parents/carers in a voluntary way so as to achieve a more positive engagement. However, little formal parenting work had been undertaken.

There was evidence that parents/carers were always interviewed in the preparation of court and referral panel reports and comment made about the need for a parenting order. This indicated a good awareness by staff of the importance of this area of work. Referral panel volunteers were clear that the involvement of parents/carers in the panel process was important and made success more likely. However, there was no specific assessment tool in place to help identify the potential for parental involvement on a voluntary basis.

#### **Strengths:**

- ◇ Regular reference was made to parents/carers in court and referral panel reports.
- ◇ Good attendance at referral panels by parents/carers supported by YOT staff.

#### **Area for improvement:**

- ◇ Assessments of parents/carers were not structured or consistent.

## 4.2

### **Interventions with the parents/carers of children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending**

#### ***Inspection criteria***

- ◇ *Interventions are provided for and taken up by the parents/carers of children and young people who either offend or are at risk of offending in accordance with assessed need.*
- ◇ *Parenting interventions are provided that are appropriate to the background, culture, ethnicity, language needs, literacy levels and gender of parents/carers.*

Initially, parenting work had been contracted out to Relate, but the YOT had not been satisfied with the service provided and had terminated the arrangement. Any parenting work undertaken was now conducted within the YOT.

A programme for parenting work had been drawn up by two of the specialist staff and two courses had been delivered. Numbers were very low and more recently the few engagements with parents/carers had taken place on an individual basis. However, this approach cannot provide attendees with the sharing of experience and support that is a key part of group work. The staff concerned were clear that workload pressures had prevented them from developing this work further.

In those few cases where parenting work was undertaken, whether statutory or voluntary, there was evidence of the work being properly targeted at parenting skills. Much of the work that was done focused on family relationships and was delivered in a way that was appropriate to the needs of those involved, albeit in a limited way.

#### ***Strength:***

- ◇ Interventions were based on identified need.

#### ***Areas for improvement:***

- ◇ Use of the programme for parenting work would help ensure consistency.
- ◇ Working with parents/carers in groups would provide some additional benefits.

### 4.3

## Outcomes for parents/carers of children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending

### **Inspection criterion**

- ◆ *Interventions for parents/carers have the desired outcomes.*

The YOT conducted a parent/carer satisfaction survey each year. Results from the latest of these, based on a small number of parents/carers, showed that all who responded were fully satisfied with their experience.

We also interviewed a few of the children and young people's parents/carers. We were impressed that they spoke very positively about the work of the YOT. They felt that the work undertaken had brought about improvement in their child's attitude and behaviour. They also felt that the YOT staff had helped them when no one else would.

### **Strengths:**

- ◆ Parents/carers had had a very positive experience of engagement with the YOT.
- ◆ An individualised approach can take account of individual needs.

### **Area for improvement:**

- ◆ Very few parents/carers were being worked with.

### **Good practice**

Comments from parents/carers included:

"They did help my relationship with my son."

"YOT work exceeded my expectations. I couldn't see the point at first, but I relate differently to my son now and my husband's relationship with him has also improved."

## **OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH PARENTS/CARERS**

***This section is judged as partly met.***

## 5.

## WORK WITH VICTIMS

### 5.1 Assessment of the needs of victims of children and young people who offend

#### ***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 offend and are supported in doing so.*

The Metropolitan Police, along with some other police services, had interpreted the Data Protection Act as limiting the initial contact with victims to the police. As a result, the police contacted victims in writing, inviting them to agree to contact by the YOT and providing a form to be returned, indicating consent. Once the form had been received, the victims' contact details would then be forwarded to the YOT. This process often took longer than the time available for a court report to be prepared.

The seconded police officer was often able to contact a victim by telephone and to secure some information which was of use to report writers. It was not possible, however, to visit victims in order to be able to engage with them in a positive way, within the required timescale.

#### ***Strength:***

- ◇ Despite the constraints, there was good information about victims in some court reports.

#### ***Area for improvement:***

- ◇ The system adopted by the Metropolitan Police for the exchange of information did not appear designed to meet victims' needs.

## 5.2

### Interventions with the victims of children and young people who offend

#### ***Inspection criteria***

- ◇ *Victims either have access to support provided directly by the YOT or are informed of relevant service providers.*
- ◇ *Victims are offered the opportunity to specify any restorative element of the child's or young person's supervision plan and to be informed of their progress.*
- ◇ *Interventions with victims are provided that are appropriate to their age, vulnerability, culture, ethnicity, language needs, literacy levels and gender.*

One of the main areas where this gap was most evident was in the very low take up rate by victims, of offers which were made for them to attend referral order panel meetings. The fact that so few victims had taken up this opportunity supported the view that a personal visit, with time to go through the issues, would be more likely to result in a higher rate of involvement.

On the occasions when a victim had attended a referral panel, members commented to us about the significant difference that their presence had made to the whole process, for both the child or young person who had offended and their parents/carers.

We were interested to note that the YOT was developing a partnership with Victim Support to provide a support worker for children and young people who are victims of crime, and hoped that this initiative would result in an increase in victim's involvement.

#### ***Strength:***

- ◇ Good reference to victims' views in many court and referral panel reports.

#### ***Area for improvement:***

- ◇ Very few victims attended referral panels.

### 5.3

### Outcomes for victims of children and young people who offend

#### ***Inspection criterion***

- ◇ *Victims are satisfied with the work undertaken by the YOT.*

There was good evidence that when the victim worker was able to engage properly with a victim, they felt significantly helped. This was reflected in the victim satisfaction survey and in the accounts of the two victims we interviewed.

#### ***Strength:***

- ◇ Victims who had engaged with the YOT were satisfied with their experience.

#### ***Area for improvement:***

- ◇ Relatively few victims receive more than a telephone contact.

### **OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH VICTIMS**

***This section is judged as partly 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 the Audit Commission, CSCI, Estyn, Healthcare Commission, HMIC, HMI Prisons, HMI Probation, Ofsted, and SSIW. The joint inspection team is located within HMI Probation and is funded by the Home Office.

### Home Office aims

The joint inspection contributes primarily to the achievement of Home Office Aims 3 and 4 to:

- ◆ 'ensure the effective delivery of justice, avoiding unnecessary delay, through efficient investigation, detection, prosecution and court procedures. To minimise the threat to and intimidation of witnesses and to engage with and support victims'
- ◆ 'deliver effective custodial and community sentences to reduce reoffending and protect the public, through the prison and probation services, in partnership with the Youth Justice Board'.

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  
2<sup>nd</sup> 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 is a long inspection programme, we decided to break it down into three phases in order to retain its relevance and ensure that it continues to consider local and national concerns. The three phases are:
  - **from September 2003 to July 2004**, when the inspection will concentrate on key issues, with emphasis placed on establishing benchmarks and the dissemination of good practice. YOTs are being asked to volunteer for this stage of the process
  - **up to September 2006**, during which time the inspections will be individually tailored to each YOT, based on an examination of the data available and the findings from other inspection programmes
  - **from September 2006 onwards**, where the inspection will focus on achievement against targets met, particularly on increasing overall performance and ensuring consistency of practice.
- ◇ 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. We have therefore developed a programme 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.
- ◇ 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**
  - **victims.**
- ◇ Each site visit during the first phase will take place over two weeks, about two to three weeks apart. The YOT will be asked to identify a random, but statistically representative sample of between 50 and 120 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.

- ◇ During the first week of the site visit, we will examine all these case files in detail. We will also, in half the cases selected, 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 believe that this can be a positive way of developing mutual understanding and helps to strengthen the links between inspection and practice.
- ◇ The second week of the inspection will involve meetings with the CEO, 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>

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in 2004.

- ◇ The file reading took place week commencing 5 January.
- ◇ The second week commenced on 2 February.

## Scoring approach

The five sections of the inspection are individually assessed against the relevant standards, using the supporting criteria. Judgements are based on:

- ◆ information supplied by the YOT
- ◆ interviews with chief officers, managers and staff both from the YOT and other partner organisations
- ◆ reading 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.

The judgements are defined as:

- ◆ **Fully met** – denoting exceptional performance beyond the requirements of national standards and other relevant guidelines
- ◆ **Satisfactorily met** – strong performance on the majority of items and at least satisfactory on the remainder, meeting the requirements of national standards and other relevant guidelines
- ◆ **Partly met** – less than satisfactory 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. No score or grading will be given during this first phase of the inspection process, but instead a general categorisation highlighting particular achievements as well as areas for improvement. This approach has been adopted as it was 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 performance of the YOT will be assessed as:

- ◆ **Commendable** – there is strong management performance and exemplary work with children and young people who offend, supported by satisfactory or better performance in other areas of work
- ◆ **Good** – there is satisfactory performance across all five sections
- ◆ **Satisfactory with good basis for development** – where, at least, both sections relating to management arrangements and work with children and young people who offend, are assessed as satisfactorily met, although others may be considered to only have been partly or not met
- ◆ **Unsatisfactory requiring improvement** – although some sections may be satisfactorily met, either the section on management arrangements or work with children and young people who offend, is assessed as partly or not met
- ◆ **Poor requiring significant improvement** – where neither the section on management arrangements or work with children and young people who offend is considered to have been satisfactorily met.

## 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 are normally addressed within 12 months of publication to allow sufficient time for integration within existing developments.
- ◆ Implementation of the recommendations is to 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 Havering YOT 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.