

Joint
Inspection
of Youth
Offending
Teams
Annual
Report
2006/2007



YOUTH
OFFENDING
TEAM
Inspection

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present this annual report on behalf of the inspectorates and regulatory bodies undertaking the YOT inspection programme. This report represents the achievement of inspection staff across the different agencies – a culmination of 12 months' work.

- This year has seen the end of Phase 3 of the inspection programme. Improvements in the assessment of Risk of Harm to others have been seen over the three phases, but there is still some way to go to ensure that all relevant cases are assessed and managed properly. The inspection process looks at Risk of Harm and safeguarding and also at how the YOT promotes the welfare and development of the child or young person, covering such issues as health and employment, training and education.
- YOT inspections are an example of joint inspection working well, with multi-inspectorate teams. These aim to mirror the disciplines and skills within the YOT and provide an opportunity to inspect the work of the YOT from an holistic basis. An individual in contact with the YOT needs to be viewed both as a child or young person and as someone who has offended (or might be about to offend). Our inspections have to take this dual profile into account.
- The YOT inspection is independent of the Joint Area Review of children's services, but the two inspections are coordinated and our findings contribute to the assessment of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. As children and young people, those in contact with the YOT should have access to services in the same way as all other children in the locality.
- Our inspection findings suggest that this is not always the case. Despite having many difficulties such as physical health needs (15%), emotional or mental health needs (40%), schooling difficulties (62%) and learning difficulties (15%), too often children and young people in contact with the YOT do not have these and their other needs met. In particular, the statutory entitlement to 25 hours education for school age children and young people is rarely achieved.

I am grateful to all the YOTs which have been inspected for the positive way they have engaged in the process. I look forward to this continuing during 2007/2008, the final year of the current programme.



A. M. Bridges

Andrew Bridges
Chief Inspector
of Probation

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THE INSPECTION TEAM 2006/2007

In 2006/2007, the inspection programme was conducted jointly by:

- Commission for Social Care Inspection
- HM Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales
- Healthcare Commission
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
- HM Inspectorate of Prisons
- HM Inspectorate of Probation
- Office for Standards in Education
- Social Services Inspectorate Wales.

The YOT inspection programme is located within and led by HM Inspectorate of Probation. In 2006/2007, the inspection was managed by Assistant Chief Inspectors Liz Calderbank and Julie Fox, with assistance from Alan MacDonald.

Inspections were undertaken by:

HM Inspectorate of Probation: Jane Attwood, Jo Bergdahl, Helen Boocock, Mark Boothe, John Browne, Malcolm Bryant, Rose Burgess, Melva Burton, Helen Cash, Ben Clark, Lisa Cox, Paddy Doyle, Sandra Fieldhouse, Krystyna Findley, Martyn Griffiths, Pam Hill, Stephen Hubbard, Jude Holland, Keith Redfern Humphreys, Martin Jolly, Sally Lester, Iolo Madoc-Jones, Shirley Magilton, Sarah Mainwaring, Stephanie Mason, Ian Menary, Chris Mills, Nicola Molloy, Joy Neary, Rachael Odunze, Vivienne O'Neale, Nigel Scarff, Joseph Simpson, Andy Smith, Dorothy Smith, Ray Wegrzyn, Steve Woodgate.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary: Steve Blackburn, Glen Suttentwood, coordinated by Rita Tucker.

Commission for Social Care Inspection: Karen McKeown, Dan Parks, coordinated by Chris Batty.

Social Services Inspectorate Wales: Sheila Booth, John Llewellyn-Thomas.

Healthcare Commission: Liz Adamson, Gordon Burton, Margaret Dexter, Alicia Etchegoyen, David Fruin, Christine Hopton, Raj Kathane, Roger Thompson, coordinated by Justin Thacker and Fergus Currie.

Office for Standards in Education: Louise Atkin, Jane Brook, Mary Dudley, Paul Johnson, Anne Keelan-Towner, Maureen McDaid, Phil Whittaker, coordinated by Stella Butler.

HM Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales: Claire Yardley, Betsan O'Connor, coordinated by Bernard O'Reilly.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons: Fay Deadman

The inspection programme was supported by: Pippa Bennett, Lynn Carroll, Natalie Dewsnap, Grace Dickin, Rachel Dwyer, Saima Ejaz, Jean Hartington, Deborah Hood, Kate Hum, Oliver Kenton, Maura O'Brien, Zach Rathore, Noel Rhone.

THE INSPECTION YEAR 2006/2007

OVERVIEW

This year has seen some further developments in the joint YOT inspection programme. We have:

- Completed Phase 3 of the inspection programme in which 31 inspections took place, three in Wales and 28 in England
- Refined our methodology for Phase 4 of the programme in response to external changes and our own learning
- Increased alignment and our contribution to the Joint Area Review of children's services
- Started the final phase of the programme which will take us to September 2008
- Completed the report *An Inspection of Junior Attendance Centres*
- Jointly published with the Healthcare Commission *Let's talk about it*, a review of healthcare findings in YOTs between September 2003 and April 2006
- Contributed to the Audit Commission's planning process to explore succession inspection arrangements in 2009.

Funded for 2006/2007 by the Home Office, HM Inspectorate of Probation purchased most contributions from the regulatory bodies working with us. During the year, in a welcome move, the office for standards in education determined that they would no longer charge us for their contribution.

The YOT inspection programme constituted the largest single element of HM Inspectorate of Probation's inspection work, utilising some 45% of our inspection resources in 2006/2007.

THE YOT INSPECTIONS

In 2006/2007 the following Phase 3 inspections were undertaken:

BARNSELY

BRIGHTON
AND HOVE

BEXLEY

BEDFORDSHIRE

BIRMINGHAM

BROMLEY

CAMBRIDGE-
SHIRE

CEREDIGION

CHESHIRE

EALING

GREENWICH

HARINGEY

HARROW

HARTLEPOOL

KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

KINGSTON
UPON THAMES

LINCOLNSHIRE

NORTH EAST
LINCOLNSHIRE

NEWCASTLE-
UPON-TYNE

NORTH
YORKSHIRE

NOTTINGHAM
CITY

PLYMOUTH

POWYS

REDBRIDGE

RHONDDA
CYNON TAF

ROTHERHAM

SUNDERLAND

SWINDON

TORBAY

WIGAN

WOLVER-
HAMPTON

In addition, two Phase 4 inspections took place: Richmond Upon Thames and Wessex. These will be reported on in the next Annual Report with other Phase 4 inspections.

WHAT IS A YOT INSPECTION?

CRITERIA AND KEY JUDGEMENTS

- Our methodology is centred on a set of criteria and key judgements which outline the basis on which we assess a YOT. This includes both outcomes and processes but concentrates on the quality of work in that area, particularly how services are delivered to children and young people, parents/carers and victims. Because YOTs are partnerships, we also look at how the partners work together to produce a quality service. Our criteria are divided into five core areas of work:
 - Management and partnership arrangements, including the role and functioning of the local YOT Management Board
 - Work in courts
 - Work with children and young people in the community
 - Work with children and young people subject to Detention and Training Orders
 - Victims and Restorative Justice.

BEFORE VISITING THE YOT

Prior to undertaking fieldwork in the YOT, and following a planning meeting, the YOT staff complete a self-assessment and provide us with written evidence of their performance and activities against our criteria. Inspectors examine Youth Justice Board data to see how the YOT is performing against key national indicators and targets. Children and young people are given an opportunity to feedback their views through the provision of a computer software programme.

DURING THE FIELDWORK VISIT

A multi-inspectorate team spends up to a week in the YOT undertaking a number of activities:

- **Assessing case files and interviewing case managers** – this enables us to get to the heart of operational delivery and see what is really happening on the ground
- **Interviews with service users** – includes a number of children and young people, parents/carers and victims. This element of the inspection enables us to see first-hand what the people using the service think about it. Is it effective? Does it help reduce offending or antisocial behaviour? Are children and young people's health, safety and wellbeing protected and improved? Is progress in education being achieved?
- **Meetings with staff and managers** – how does it feel to be a member of staff in this organisation? Is support and training in place? Are those delivering particular services appropriately qualified and experienced?

- **Interviews with partners and strategic managers** – for example, from the courts or those on the YOT Management Board. We ask questions such as – is the YOT Management Board effective in both supporting the YOT and holding the managers to account? Do members know enough about the business they are overseeing? Are all partners contributing appropriately to both the strategic and operational aspect of the service?

CONTRIBUTION TO THE JOINT AREA REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES (Led by the Office for Standards in Education) AND THE CORPORATE ASSESSMENT (Led by the Audit Commission)

Relevant information is passed from the YOT to the Joint Area Review of children's services and we participate in the final phase of their inspections, contributing to all five Every Child Matters outcomes, and to the Crime and Disorder elements of the Corporate Assessment of local authority services.

COLLATING THE EVIDENCE AND PRODUCING THE REPORT

The lead inspector gathers together all the evidence and produces a report. Emphasis is placed on the YOT's key task of preventing offending and the integration of its work with that of children's services within the locality. Particular attention is paid to the assessment and management of those few children and young people considered a Risk of Harm to the community, and to the safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people. The accessibility of mainstream services to those in contact with the YOT is also examined.

Each of the five sections above is scored on a 1-4 basis (inadequate, adequate, good, excellent) in line with the Joint Area Review and Corporate Assessment gradings, and a number of recommendations for improvement are outlined.

The report is submitted to the Home Secretary and, following its publication, to relevant other personnel (such as local Members of Parliament), and to the YOT and its partners. Occasionally a re-inspection is necessary; this would normally take place 12 months after the publication of the report.

IMPROVING PRACTICE

The YOT prepares an improvement plan based on the recommendations which is 'signed off' by HM Inspectorate of Probation and then handed to the Youth Justice Board to monitor implementation.

THE YOT INSPECTION – PHASE THREE FINDINGS

This summary takes account of the 31 YOTs inspected in England and Wales during the last year. It does not include re-inspections. Percentages reflect statistics for both pre- and post-16 year olds.

Phase 3 inspections started a link with the Joint Area Reviews of children's services and the Crime and Disorder elements of the Corporate Assessment of local authority services (in England only). These relationships have been developed and embedded during the last year, reflecting the need for inspectorates and YOT services to embrace both the children's and the criminal justice agenda. Anecdotally, this alignment seems to have raised the importance of YOT work amongst local authorities. Some areas have now recognised the need for greater inclusion of these children and young people in both mainstream provision and in partnership working to achieve successful outcomes with them.

In Wales, we have not been able to coordinate our timetable with the Reviews of Children's Services and the Young People's Partnership inspections, but we have been involved in discussions to explore this in future years.

Over the three phases we have amassed considerable data relating to the performance of YOTs across a number of years. This year, we are again showing some of the trends across these data.

ASSESSMENT

Asset is the Youth Justice Board's structured assessment tool for children and young people who have offended. The purpose of undertaking such an assessment is to identify the risk factors associated with offending, drawing on a wide variety of sources of evidence. The process covers a core profile for gathering information:

- Offences and criminal history
- Living arrangements
- Family and personal relationships
- Employment, training and education
- Neighbourhood
- Lifestyle
- Substance use
- Physical health
- Emotional and mental health
- Perception of self and others
- Thinking and behaviour
- Attitudes to offending
- Motivation to change
- A self-assessment called *What do YOU think?*

We inspect to see if this assessment was both timely and of sufficient quality. By this we mean that the content should be comprehensive and credible, with the sources of information identified. Usually, this would have included the child or young person's view of their own situation (via completion of the *What do YOU think?* form) which can be a valuable source of information that is not always included in the supervision planning process.

There was little change to assessment timeliness and quality over the three phases of the inspection, but it was pleasing to see a greater number of completions of *What do YOU think?* Getting assessment right is an essential pre-requisite for appropriate and properly sequenced interventions.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Initial assessment completed in accordance with the national standard – timeliness	80%	84%	81%
Initial assessment completed in accordance with the national standard – quality	80%	80%	71%
The child or young person completed a <i>What do YOU think?</i> form	Not collected	45%	56%

RISK OF HARM

As an inspectorate we accord considerable focus in our work to the assessment and management of Risk of Harm. In this context, we use the term when a child or young person may pose a Risk of Harm to others. This public protection element could relate to anyone who could be hurt such as another child, a parent/carer or worker, or a member of the general public. The Risk of Harm may be low or it may constitute a serious risk where permanent damage or death to the victim could be the ultimate outcome. Fortunately, despite some media suggestions to the contrary, the number of children and young people assessed as a high Risk of Harm to others is very low.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Full Risk of Harm to others completed on relevant cases	40%	54%	69%
If 'risk concern' or 'risk aware' was the case referred to a manager?	61%	71%	85%
If the case was identified as 'risk concern' or 'risk aware', was there evidence in the file that the manager has reviewed the case on a regular basis?	41%	40%	48%

Whilst Risk of Harm can never be eliminated, we do expect staff to do their job properly in supervising these difficult children and young people. This involves undertaking both risk assessments (bringing together all the information they can to develop a picture of this child or young person and what may make them more likely to offend), and to then manage any risk there is. Managing the risk will include what we refer to as both constructive and, for the most serious, restrictive interventions. Constructive interventions include working with the child or young person on issues such as victim awareness or direct victim contact work, thinking skills and attitudes, motivation or practical issues such as ensuring that they are in receipt of medication or getting adequate sleep, and employment, training and education. Restrictive interventions are those which impose external controls on behaviour such as order or licence conditions; for example, a condition as to where the individual can reside or visit, drug or alcohol testing and electronic monitoring.

It was therefore pleasing to see some improvements in the appropriate measures to assess risk and manage it. Risk of Harm is not a static factor, that is it does not necessarily remain the same over time. It can be affected by a wide range of issues – or combination of them, such as basic needs, emotional state, motivation and opportunity. Therefore, it is important for workers to be continuously alert to changes which may take place and for their managers to be aware and oversee what the worker is doing – both in a challenging and supportive way. These statistics suggest that both the assessments and the referrals to a manager for those cases where there are concerns has improved significantly over the three phases of the inspection. However, although the manager may be informed about a particular case, we found that in only half the relevant cases was there evidence that they had reviewed it on a regular basis.

SUPERVISION AND TRAINING PLANS

Having undertaken an assessment, the case manager has now to work with the child or young person, their parent/carer and other relevant personnel, including secure establishment staff where applicable, to develop a supervision or training plan. This details what work will be undertaken with that individual over the time of the planned contact. In the case of secure establishment sentences, the plan should cover both the time in custody and the community element of the sentence and pay particular attention to the transition between the two.

We are looking here for a plan which meets the national standards (particularly addressing those factors that relate to the offending behaviour) and with objectives which are measurable, achievable and outcome focused and designed for that individual. The danger is to include wide ranging general objectives rather than simple, achievable small steps. It is concerning to see a reduction in the quality of initial supervision/training plans in the last year and in the number of initial plans containing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bounded objectives.

Reviews are an opportunity to 'take stock' and check whether the interventions being delivered are achieving what they set out to do. There was evidence that the timeliness of these was improving over the three phases of the inspection.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Initial training/supervision plan of adequate quality	47%	52%	36%
Close fit between interventions planned and the assessed Risk of Harm	72%	74%	76%
Initial supervision/training plan met the content requirements of national standards and contained specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bounded objectives	18%	52%	31%
The initial supervision plan was reviewed in accordance with the national standard timescales	71%	74%	80%

APPOINTMENTS AND COMPLIANCE

In order to work with a child or young person constructively, it is important to ensure that there is clarity about when and where to attend appointments and for those appointments to be of an adequate frequency to have an impact on their behaviour. The figures below show that whilst there was a dip in Phase 2, improvements have been made in the latest phase of the inspection. For frequency of appointments and breach action this improvement was statistically significant and demonstrated progress over time.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Frequency of appointments arranged broadly conformed to national standards, order/licence requirements and any Risk of Harm considerations	83%	75%	80%
Judgements about acceptability/unacceptability of absences appropriate	76%	71%	73%
Breach action/recall action, if required, taken place within the national standard timescale	67%	49%	57%

INTERVENTION DELIVERY

The purpose of interventions is to change behaviour, or assist a child or young person in some other way to help them stop offending. This involves the delivery of work which needs to be appropriate to the individual, sequenced to take place in the right order, and reinforced by the case supervisor. Interventions can take a wide variety of forms. Many are designed to help the child or young person think about the consequences of their behaviour, in relation to the victim, but also for themselves and their family and friends. It can teach them how to avoid situations, and the benefits of not getting involved. The inspection process looked at the areas below where the figures have remained virtually static over the three phases.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Appropriate interventions carried out proportionate to the child or young person's Risk of Harm and likelihood of reoffending	70%	66%	69%
Work was undertaken to raise the child or young person's awareness of the impact of the crime on the victim	65%	63%	62%
The case supervisor motivates the child or young person by reinforcing work undertaken by others	83%	68%	82%

EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

In all three phases of the inspection, two-thirds of children and young people in contact with the YOT were identified as having experienced difficulty with their schooling, with over 80% of those having had action taken in response. What we do not know from these figures is whether that action was successful in reintegrating the individual back into mainstream school or arranging alternative provision for their statutory 25 hours per week entitlement.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
A learning difficulty was identified	17%	18%	15%
Evidence to suggest the child or young person was experiencing difficulty with their schooling	Not collected	71%	67%
Where there is evidence of difficulty with schooling, action has been taken	Not collected	81%	82%

HEALTH ASSESSMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

There are a number of health needs which may impact on criminal behaviour, such as mental health and drug or alcohol abuse. It is important for these issues to be first identified and then acted upon.

The figures below suggest that there has been little change over time in the number of children and young people who had had their needs met. Our figures suggest this is not happening in about a third of the cases inspected.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Evidence of physical health need	22%	16%	15%
Evidence of an appropriate referral made in relation to physical health	72%	67%	67%
Evidence of emotional or mental health need	43%	45%	41%
Evidence of an appropriate referral made in relation to emotional or mental health need	72%	67%	70%
Evidence of drug misuse	Not collected	44%	40%
Evidence of alcohol misuse	Not collected	37%	35%
Evidence of an appropriate referral made in relation to substance misuse	Not collected	67%	74%

OUTCOMES

Have the interventions worked? In the time span of the inspection process, it was not possible to wait to see if the child or young person has remained offence free over a longer period of time. What we did as part of the inspection process was to ascertain if there has been any criminal activity during the course of the order. As can be seen from the figures below, this had remained static over the three phases. It was a useful measure, although it can be affected by how much investigation the YOT undertake. For example, if its links with police intelligence are good, it is likely that it will have more information about the children and young people and their criminal activities than another YOT where there is little sharing of intelligence.

A short-term output measure emerges from the review of cases where improvement can be ascertained through the Asset scoring system. Whilst this was not a clear measure of reoffending or not, what it does do is help assess progress towards that goal.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
No evidence of criminal activity whilst on order or licence to date	73%	71%	70%
Most recent Asset score shows an improvement over the initial score	55%	53%	51%

PARENTS/CARERS

This area covers both statutory and voluntary interventions where parent/carers were currently involved in an intervention to assist them to be better parents/carers. Following an increase in Phase 2, the proportion seems to have stabilised and yet was a relatively small percentage overall. Nearly three-quarters of those involved in parenting interventions were assessed as having had their specific diversity needs met.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Parents/carers involved in a parenting intervention	7%	12%	13%
Parenting intervention satisfies specific needs of parents/carers in relation to diversity issues	Not collected	Not collected	74%

VICTIMS

Police notification of victims' details in final warning cases has improved over the three phases, which should enable more victims to be invited to participate in restorative justice measures.

Area of practice	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Police notified YOT of victims details in accordance with final warning guidance	53%	59%	68%
Victims invited to be involved	53%	39%	56%

CONCLUSION

Whilst there have been some improvements in relation to Risk of Harm over the three phases, the quality of supervision plans is still lacking and there are many other issues where there is no change.

YOT INSPECTION KEY STATISTICS 2006/2007

In the 31 YOTs inspected during 2006/2007, we were pleased to find that in many of the cases we examined the key indicators of quality of service were positive, but there is still room for improvement.

Similarly to last year, we note no significant differences when breaking down the statistics to look at vulnerable children and young people and those convicted of violent offences. We would reinforce last year's message that YOTs need to adopt a more proportionate approach when working with vulnerable or more challenging children and young people.

We have conducted an analysis by gender and ethnicity and we are pleased to note that no statistically significant differences were discovered. We will continue to monitor our criteria for any unequal treatment by these key diversity characteristics. These results are available on request from the inspectorate.

STRENGTHS

- Most initial assessments were completed in time to the national standard
- The great majority of cases with a 'risk concern' or a 'risk aware' status were referred to a manager
- The frequency of appointments broadly conformed to the national standard and/or the requirements of the order/licence and to risk considerations.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Appropriate action was taken for the majority of children and young people vulnerable to harm from themselves or others – but we note with concern that this criterion was assessed as sufficient for almost one in seven vulnerable children and young people
- Although progress has been made on ensuring initial supervision plans met national standards, the majority of examples we saw did not meet the content requirements or contain objectives which could be described as specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bounded
- Some progress has been made in ensuring breach and recall actions are taken within timescale, but almost four in ten fall below expectations.

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS

	All Files		Vulnerable Young People		Violent Offences	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Initial assessment completed in accordance with the national standard – timeliness	989	81%	288	87%	328	83%
Initial assessment completed in accordance with the national standard – adequate quality	982	71%	286	68%	328	66%
If there was an answer of ‘yes’ or score of 1 or more to any of the relevant indicators in the initial Asset form, has the full risk of serious harm Asset been completed?	405	71%	163	73%	205	79%
If ‘risk concern’ or ‘risk aware’ was the case referred to a manager?	168	85%	82	82%	100	87%
Initial supervision plan/training review plan met the content requirements of national standards and contained specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bounded objectives	399	36%	167	43%	157	34%
Frequency of appointments arranged broadly conformed to national standards, to the requirements of order/licence, and to any Risk of Harm considerations	689	83%	243	84%	260	82%
Judgements about acceptability/unacceptability of absences appropriate	587	73%	213	73%	221	74%
Breach/recall action, if required, took place within the national standard timescale	230	59%	94	60%	77	53%
No evidence of criminal activity while on order/licence to date	971	70%	287	57%	323	73%
If action taken for children and young people considered vulnerable to harm from self or others, it was appropriate to the needs of the case	233	86%	233	86%	80	86%
If there was evidence of educational difficulties action taken was effective	327	70%	139	65%	126	78%
If there was evidence of physical or mental health needs or drug/alcohol misuse, appropriate referral had been made	852	71%	403	76%	290	74%

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Over the past year we have seen a number of YOTs where there are no seconded staff from a particular discipline. This was more likely to be from probation or children's social care, although it has also occurred in relation to health and education professionals too. Sometimes the YOT was provided with a financial substitute, sometimes not.

Our understanding of the underlying principle of having appropriately qualified staff seconded from their statutory parent organisation, was that they bring to the YOT different skills, which together with other team members can help address the range of factors that contribute to a child or young person offending. The importance of the secondment (as opposed to a direct appointment), was therefore that the individual worker can maintain contact and undertake training in their parent organisation, thus keeping up to date with knowledge and skills in their area of expertise. Having a 'gap' in a particular discipline is likely to remove an aspect of skills which may not be found in other staff, and may also be against both the spirit and letter of partnership working in the YOT as outlined in Part III, paragraph 39 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act states:

- (3) It shall be the duty of –
 - (a) every chief officer of police any part of whose police area lies within the local authority's area; and
 - (b) every probation committee or health authority any part of whose area lies within that area, to co-operate in the discharge by the local authority of their duty and
- (5) A youth offending team shall include at least one of each of the following, namely –
 - (a) a probation officer;
 - (b) a social worker of a local authority social services department;
 - (c) a police officer;
 - (d) a person nominated by a health authority any part of whose area lies within the local authority's area;
 - (e) a person nominated by the chief education officer appointed by the local authority under section 532 of the Education Act 1996.

Whilst we recognise that at times the size of the YOT may not necessitate a full time representative and there are recruitment difficulties which may impact on appropriate appointments, there are some possible ways in both the short and long-term this could be tackled. Payments 'in kind' through the provision of training and consultancy (for example in assessing Risk of Harm, health and education needs) could go some way to tackle the issue. For a longer term solution, exploration of the internal development of staff coupled with external qualifications may assist the achievement of adherence to the Act.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

With the development of joint children's services (bringing together social and education services) and Children's Trusts progress, we have seen a number of YOTs moving across to be line managed through this department. This can have the advantage of bringing closer working between the two services (including for example greater access by the YOT to the children's services database) but we would flag up some possible concerns too.

It is important to establish clear boundaries and thresholds between both types of work and ensure that the YOT is not seen as an all-encompassing service. The YOT exists to prevent offending by children and young people and thereby protect the public. Another element of this work includes safeguarding their rights and promoting their welfare. We see this as an essential issue in terms of protecting children and young people (from others or themselves) and one which fits very clearly into the Every Child Matters outcome 'stay safe'. This does not, in our view, mean the provision by the YOT of all services for children and young people in respect of safety, that is, acting in the place of children's social care in addition to YOT responsibilities – as this can create a conflict of interests from the child or young person's point of view in relation to the preventing offending objective.

At a strategic level, we think it is important that the YOT Management Board retains strategic representation from both education and social care. This is to ensure that both these very important aspects of work (such as maintaining links with mainstream provision) with children and young people in contact with the YOT are championed. With the changes to Connexions, including for some a planned return to the management of the local authority, the retention of representatives for both training and employment at both pre- and post-16 will also be important.

11% of the cases we have inspected have been Looked After Children. This is an over-representation in comparison to the general population and needs to be addressed. With 94% of these cases children's social care services had been involved or consulted during the supervision period. Of all the cases assessed, the inspection staff considered 21% vulnerable to harm from themselves and 20% vulnerable to harm from others. This high proportion emphasises the need for all staff to be vigilant and have knowledge and skills to equip them to identify and act on safeguarding issues.

A key prevention partnership development with Looked After Children to reduce their representation in the criminal justice system has been the working of YOT staff with residential homes personnel, both local authority and private, to introduce protocols with the police and train staff in restorative justice techniques. The purpose of this is to prevent the criminalisation of those children and young people in their care – often in situations where the same behaviour by a child or young person in a family situation would not have resulted in the calling of the police and subsequent criminal justice action. These are welcome initiatives.

EDUCATION

With education partners, we have seen good partnership arrangements overall with protocols in place in most instances. Attendance at the YOT Management Board has been variable, or there have been officers in attendance lacking sufficient seniority to have a strategic view or make decisions. In some instances, a lack of knowledge about employment, training and education data has led to poor scrutiny of education outcomes at a strategic level and the lower profile of this very important aspect of YOT work.

Operationally, we have seen very good collaboration between agencies such as education welfare, youth service, Connexions and local schools. When links to the local authority were strong with attendance of YOT education workers to 'pupil out of school' meetings, this appeared to be more positive and resulted in better education outcomes or placements for the children and young people known to the YOT. Increasingly, links between education staff and preventative programmes such as Youth Inclusion Support Panels and work by the YOT in schools has been effective in work with children and young people at risk of offending.

The impact of a poor range of post-16 provision and difficulties in engaging with some colleges, training providers and businesses can be significant to children and young people who may be seen as more demanding. Where we have seen this successfully developed, Connexions have undertaken an important role. Whilst a reduction in those children and young people who are not in education, employment or training has been achieved, often the provision is inappropriate, short-term or placements break down.

We have seen a number of instances where education staff are being used for generic casework with their specialist education role undermined. This may be due to a lack of rigour at the Management Board level. It seems this is more likely to happen when staff are directly employed by the YOT.

HEALTH

We have seen some improvements in the participation by strategic health representatives on YOT Management Boards, although there was little overall consistency across different YOTs. Structural changes within health services have negatively affected the degree of participation in the short-term. Where they were represented, however, regular attendees were proactive in their involvement.

Health priorities and targets for children and young people were much more likely to be clearly reflected in wider plans and strategies for children's services. Specific formal service level agreements and protocols between the YOT and health services needed to be more widespread to ensure consistent working practices.

One particular area which required further attention was in relation to the sharing of relevant case file information between the YOT and health workers. Essential communication had clearly been hampered by separate file systems and restricted access even where children and young people had expressed a willingness to have this information shared or synchronised.

As with education, there have been instances where health staff have been used to manage generic cases or been given additional duties which undermined their specialist role. Having said that, good relationships between YOT workers and health professionals have generally been successfully developed at an operational level. There were, nevertheless, instances where lengthy vacancies and long recruitment processes had undermined good working practices.

One area which needed to be addressed by strategic and operational health representatives was assessment and intervention in relation to physical health needs for children and young people within the YOT. This area was too often seen as a low priority with potentially significant needs remaining hidden. Where physical health assessments were undertaken, these were often cursory and carried out by workers who were not qualified or who had not undertaken sufficient appropriate training.

POLICE

The police were generally full and active members of the Management Board and where partnerships worked well we have seen positive joint work on reducing offending. However, there has been a notable exception. Policing initiatives, such as 'Bringing offenders to justice', have created considerable problems for YOTs by criminalising very minor offenders. This has resulted in increases of workload which have not been anticipated or resourced – in one area this was up 41% in less than 12 months. If strategies are not co-ordinated to counter this sort of impact of one organisation's targets across to another, the outcome on the YOT is to put pressure on resources and reduce the likely success of programmes designed to tackle more serious offending. We hope, therefore, that the future impact of national targets is assessed prior to implementation and that locally agencies seek to work together to avoid similar results.

PROBATION

There were wide variations in the involvement of probation representatives in the YOT Management Boards and in the provision of, or support to, seconded staff. Whilst some of this may link with recruitment difficulties, there did seem in some areas to be a view that the partnership went in one way only, which was the giving of resources to the YOT from probation. There was little recognition that input at a juvenile level may reduce the number of adult offenders (and consequently the probation workload) and that there were opportunities for areas to gain as well as give. This could be utilised through joint family work or 'in kind' resources such as safeguarding training from the YOT to probation staff.

Improvements have been seen in the involvement of YOTs in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

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MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

When inspecting the management arrangements for a YOT we are looking for strategic oversight and coordination including links with other initiatives, shared planning, and management of conflicting targets. We look to see if partner organisations are working together to deter children and young people from offending, with effective staff who can enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes being achieved. The inclusion of outcomes is an important one. It is very easy to spend a lot of time undertaking a range of activities with children and young people, but the importance of doing them is that some change is effected which reduces either the likelihood or the actual rate of offending. This is most likely to be a direct change in their thinking and/or behaviour or improvements in employment, training or education, but sometimes it can be sufficient, for example, to improve the environment in which they live or the friends they keep. The strategic partnership approach recognises the range of elements which may be influential in deterring a child or young person from offending.

STRENGTHS

The relatively few YOTs which we assessed as excellent in their management in the last year were characterised by a number of common features:

LEADERSHIP

- A Management Board with a high profile within the local authority, and effective integration into other local strategic structures and plans (e.g. the Youth Justice Plan into the Crime, Disorder and Substance Misuse Strategy)
- Regularly attended meetings (monthly or bi-monthly), with knowledgeable, proactive and committed partners at the appropriate level of seniority, and elected members, who acted together in a problem-solving capacity to resolve local issues
- Clear participation in or links and interest from the Chief Executive to the YOT Management Board (or its equivalent)
- A performance management culture with regular reports which went beyond the Youth Justice Board targets and key performance indicators, and a strong emphasis on the scrutiny role
- A professional, committed and well-respected YOT Manager who provided strong leadership.

PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES

- Up-to-date service level agreements and protocols which actively guided partnership working
- Well-integrated membership of structures across both the crime and the children's agenda
- YOTs which were well resourced and appropriately staffed by partners with links with parent agencies to enhance professional skills
- Good integration into Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
- A range of funding from different sources, for example community regeneration initiatives.

STAFF SUPERVISION, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

- Comprehensive, clear and up-to-date policies, procedures and guidance which were well communicated to staff
- Staff who received a thorough induction, with monthly supervision and annual appraisals linked to the priorities set in the Youth Justice Plan
- A comprehensive training plan linked to the Youth Justice Plan, with a range of opportunities for staff development both internally and for relevant external qualifications and with opportunities in their parent agency too.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Not surprisingly, the converse almost exclusively applied to those who fared less well on the management elements of the inspection.

LEADERSHIP

- Unclear lines of responsibility to the Chief Executive
- Lack of integration, strategic direction and planning between the criminal justice and child welfare responsibilities
- Little evidence of rigorous oversight and challenge to the YOT, with a lack of understanding by Board members of the YOT's work
- Inconsistent and insufficient attendance and involvement by a number of the statutory partners – in particular probation and health representatives and to some extent education
- Numerous managerial changes in the 'ownership' of the YOT by the local authority
- Management Board not operating in a performance management culture; insufficient information provided to them
- A number of temporary staff in all areas of the YOT, but particularly in the management posts.

PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES

- Lack of integration and gaps between the Youth Justice Plan and other key strategic plans such as health
- Capacity issues in the YOT relating to overall resourcing (including at times inappropriate or insufficient office accommodation) and insufficient contribution by partners
- An absence of the non-statutory sector on the Management Board
- Absent or incomplete service level agreements and protocols.

STAFF SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

- High turnover of staff
- Unclear or few policies and procedures
- Little or no supervision and appraisal of staff, or of insufficient quality
- Unclear links between supervision and appraisal, where these processes took place, local and national targets and Youth Justice Plans
- Lack of professional qualification
- Inadequate or no training plan, few opportunities for training either internally through the YOT or through partner agencies, or training not prioritised, for example to Risk of Harm and safeguarding issues
- Safety and protection assurance issues not fully in place (such as Criminal Record Bureau checks, health and safety assessments).

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GOOD PRACTICE

At each management meeting, case studies were presented to members to illustrate the work of the Youth Offending Service. Board members felt that this was a good way of helping them focus on the core business of the Board and have the opportunity of seeing policies in practice. (Sunderland)

The strategic position of the Management Board enabled prompt action on cross-cutting issues. One such issue brought to the Board was the confusion in local schools regarding the reporting to the police of crimes committed on the premises. All relevant senior agencies agreed to the setting up of a group for head teachers with the police to clarify protocols. This was chaired by the Youth Offending Service manager and will result in agreed protocols. (Rotherham)

The Head of Youth Offending Services was a member of the Local Criminal Justice Board and chaired the Confidence subgroup. These links were particularly strong and the YOT was regarded as occupying a pivotal position in connecting a number of criminal justice and children's social care agendas in the county. These links had promoted effective partnership work and put the YOT at the heart of the criminal justice system in Cheshire, resulting in more cohesive working. The Head of Youth Offending Services also represented the criminal justice agencies at the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. (Cheshire)

Policy and performance groups, in relation to the Youth Justice Board performance framework, had been developed. These groups covered most areas of performance and met on a quarterly basis. Membership comprised the lead manager and a number of staff responsible for the delivery of all aspects of the particular service, e.g. court work, employment, training and education, assessment planning, interventions and supervision. The purpose of the quarterly meetings was to confirm accurate performance data for Youth Justice Board returns. The group also identified and promoted good practice, highlighted any diversity or training issues, and developed and implemented policy, procedure and practice. Strategic issues were identified and fed back to the Head of Youth Offending Services to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services. (Cheshire)

Northumbria police used the Youth Offending Service to provide short placements for trainee police officers. They spent two days working on community payback schemes to learn about its work and develop communication skills with children and young people. (Sunderland)

There was a well-researched, evidence-based approach to understanding children and young people and drinking. With support from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership a report was produced called *No Limits*. This initiated a multi-agency action plan and creation of a 'Know the Code' campaign for children and young people, parents/carers and the licensing trade. This work brought in new partners and funding from Torbay Health and Social Care Partnership and Safer Communities. The outcomes were impressive, they helped to:

- reduce the consumption of alcohol by children and young people
- decrease violent crimes, particularly those committed by girls and young women aged under 18 years. This had fallen by 19.6% in the period April 2005 to January 2006. The 'Know the Code' campaign won a prestigious Responsible Drinks Retailing Award in 2006. (Torbay)

The Head of Youth Offending Services had attended a number of senior management team meetings of the Cheshire Probation Board and had been a keynote speaker at the probation area's annual conference. (Cheshire)

Harrow had a case facilitator who attended the YOT once a fortnight. The aim of the session was to allow YOT staff to reflect on practice i.e. what theoretical framework was driving work and how they responded to children and young people. In particular there was a focus on identifying and managing risk factors. Each YOT worker presented a case for discussion and provided a follow-up of progress at the next stage. There was a requirement that all available staff attended and no managers were present which enabled staff to talk freely, although any operational policy issues that were identified were reported back to the operations manager for action. (Harrow)

A case conference approach was employed and developed by partnership agencies, where necessary, to deal with difficult cases, particularly in relation to antisocial behaviour. One example was an 11 year old presenting enormous problems for the community and agencies. Instead of an antisocial behaviour order or other punitive measures, an intensive out-of-borough fostering arrangement (funded by the Youth Justice Board) was set up addressing the needs of the child as a whole. The order with the YOT had expired but continued funding for the placement was approved by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Family and children's services. This case was an example of effective joined-up working at a local level, with overarching objectives to meet the needs of the child as well as the community. To date there have been no further problems. (Kensington and Chelsea)

WORK IN THE COURTS

With the high numbers of children and young people subject to remands in custody or sentenced to custody, bail supervision and support are both important aspects of contact between YOT services and the child or young person and between the YOT and the courts. The majority of YOTs had agreements in place with their local courts and were often members of Youth Court User and/or Court User Groups. Many provided briefing sessions and training to sentencers, although this was predominantly in the lower courts. Most courts were generally satisfied with the services they received from the YOT, but this did not always translate into practice in terms of positive outcomes for children and young people in court.

BAIL SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

There was evidence from our file assessments that most YOTs had a sufficient range of suitable services to provide the court with alternatives to remand into a secure establishment. The data indicated that where bail applications were successful, the support provided to prevent offending and protect the individual was sufficient or excellent in 94% of cases. During bail support, contact was made in accordance with national standards in 91% of cases. However, home visits were only conducted in accordance with the standard in 59% of cases, which was surprising as this was a time when these may well be particularly important.

GOOD PRACTICE

The court team was committed to ensuring that bail support was only offered to children and young people who were suitable. This not only included whether they were likely to be remanded into custody but also that they were assessed as being able to comply with the requirements and, importantly, the risk to the public could be managed effectively. An example of good practice was in relation to one young person who had been given a bail Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme following an assessment including Risk of Harm to others. Whilst on bail the young person was involved in an incident where he had intimidated a victim. The court team re-assessed the risk to the public and returned the case to court. The court was asked, in the interests of public protection, to remove the bail support package. Whilst this did result in the young person being remanded into custody, it was agreed that it was the most effective way of managing the heightened Risk of Harm to the public. (Rotherham)

Wigan and Bolton Appropriate Adult Scheme operated seven days a week and consisted of approximately 30 volunteers. It was overseen by a steering group containing the YOT Appropriate Adult coordinator, YOT managers, police and social services. Volunteers received a structured induction consisting of training days, visits to custody suites and shadowing another volunteer on at least three occasions before they could support a child or young person. They could repeat the shadowing as often as they wished, in particular if they had not been called out for a while. Induction included specific attention to diversity and an evening devoted to child protection and vulnerability. The weekly rota was faxed to the custody suite every Friday for commencement the following Monday. Following call-out, volunteers immediately faxed full details to the YOT. The effectiveness of the scheme was monitored through a questionnaire to the local custody sergeant following every call-out. (Wigan)

REPORTS TO COURT

We asked to read a sample of pre-sentence reports, half based on the file sample and half free-standing. Over the year we read more than 600 reports. The majority of those were for the youth court with 17% having been heard in the Crown Court. The race and ethnic origin of the children and young people whose reports were read spanned almost all the standard 16 categories, but with the majority of white British origin: 65%. Of the sample 23% were female. Just over half the reports resulted in a supervision order (53%) whilst 17% were sentenced to a detention and training order.

In many YOTs, the quality of pre-sentence reports often brought the overall score for this section down. Whilst sentencers were usually very satisfied with the quality of reports, inspectors felt that they could be better and assessed the overall quality of reports as sufficient or excellent in just over half of those seen.

As a document, the pre-sentence report should be objective but also persuasive as it is the 'shop window' of the YOT work. The current high numbers of children and young people in secure establishments, both over time and in comparison with other countries, suggests that we can afford to deal with more in the community without a detrimental effect on crime statistics. Thus, the pre-sentence report is a document which in most cases will be outlining how that individual can be deterred from offending whilst in the community. Its success depends on whether it can put a persuasive case forward to the sentencer to use a community disposal that is likely to be less damaging to the individual but can also protect the public from harm and reoffending. Excellent relationships may exist between the YOT and sentencers, but the proof is in the confidence of the sentencer to go with the proposal. It is likely to help if magistrates are familiar with what takes place on that disposal and are clear that if compliance is not achieved then the YOT will bring the child or young person back to court.

STRENGTHS

- Almost all children and young people were interviewed at least once for the purpose of the report, with parents/carers included in most cases
- A clear proposal, commensurate with the seriousness of the offence, was included in almost all reports
- Report content was free from discriminatory language and stereotypes.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 20% of reports were not based on Asset
- A description of the offence, as distinct from an analysis, was present in just over half of reports
- Clear likelihood of reoffending and Risk of Harm differentiation was not present in 47% of reports, and how the report dealt with issues of Risk of Harm was sufficient or excellent in only 45% of those read
- Victim impact was not adequately addressed in almost two-thirds of reports
- Whilst safeguarding issues had been identified in three-quarters of reports, attention had been paid to vulnerability (i.e. Risk of Harm from self or others) in 61%.

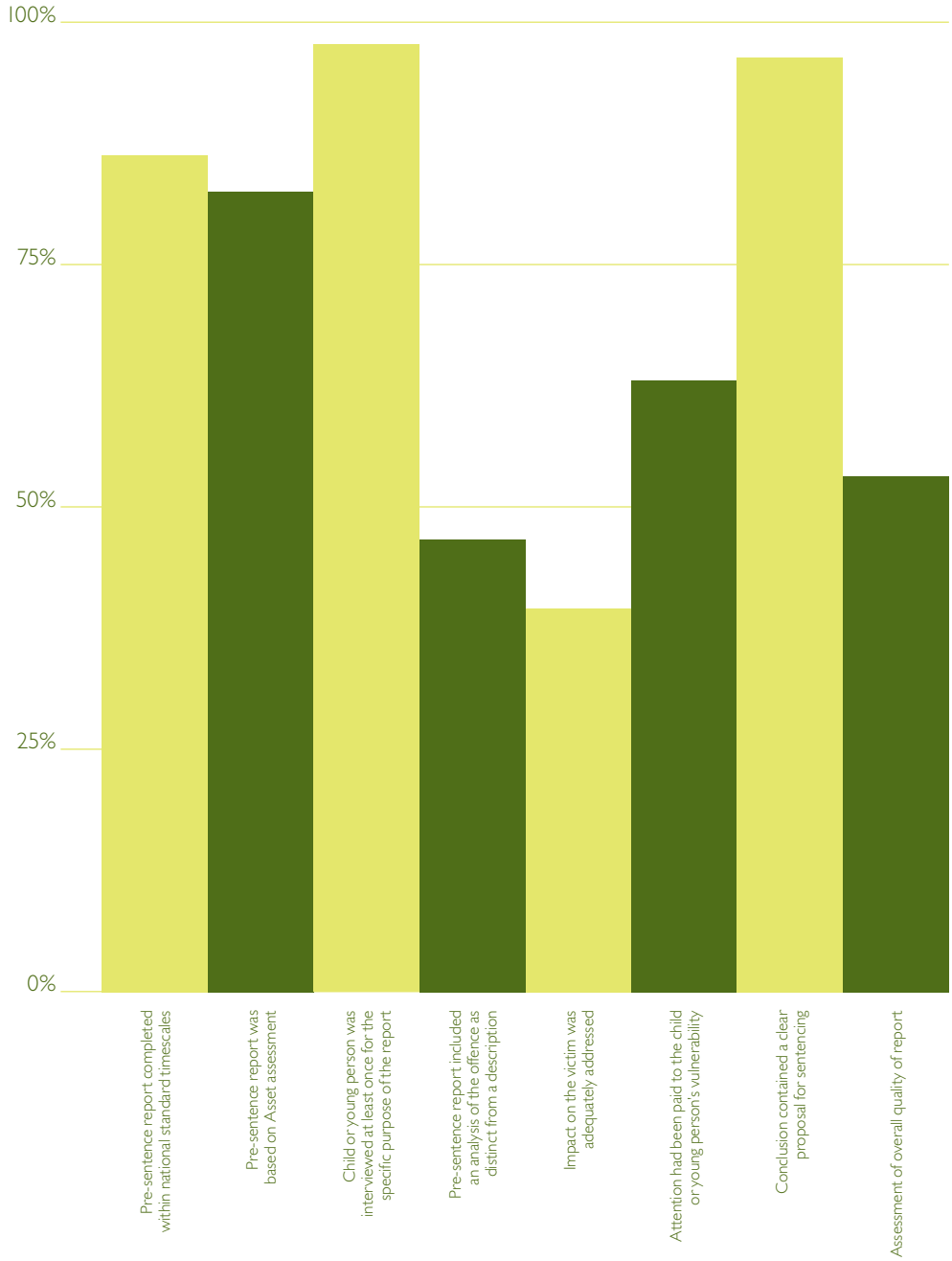
We analyse our data based on gender and race/ethnicity but overall we did not find statistically significant variation in the data between either of these categories.

We have drawn to the attention of the Youth Justice Board our view that there should be more guidance on pre-sentence reports and our understanding is that this will be available in 2008.

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PRE-SENTENCE REPORTS



GOOD PRACTICE

The initial identification of a risk of secure remand, or Young Offender Institution sentence was made by the Deputy Head of Services for Courts and Programmes who received court results containing information on which risk was assessed. These cases were then referred to either the Youth Offending Service Risk of Serious Harm or Risk of Custody Panel, and appropriate plans were put in place to minimise the likelihood of custody. (Ealing)

The feedback and data received about sentencing were analysed and used to improve practice. A recent report contained figures illustrating the patterns of sentencing to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes. These showed a majority of children and young people sentenced were from black and minority ethnic populations. To raise awareness of diversity issues and discuss the disproportionate impact youth justice remand and sentencing arrangements had on children and young people from these communities, the court had invited the YOT to take part in its Race Action Plan process. (Kingston Upon Thames)

Following the sentencing of a number of first-time offenders to custody, the YOS manager met with the District Judge to discuss his concerns and identify what could have been done to avoid a custodial sentence. The discussion identified that the District Judge was concerned about the 'robustness' of the implementation of referral orders. The YOS manager agreed to provide the Judge with information on every fifth referral order for the next 12 month period. The information included:

- the timescales for the first Youth Offender Panel
- content of the contract
- updates on progress
- outcomes.

The review of the first 12 months is due shortly but anecdotal evidence suggests that the Judge's belief in the validity of referral orders has increased. Other YOTs in the region have begun to replicate this approach to build sentencer confidence. (Rotherham)

The YOS was instrumental in the development of a resource that offered a translation of key Criminal Justice Act concepts. This enabled interpreters to offer children and young people who did not have English as their first language a means of understanding the court processes. (Birmingham)

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

**THIS SECTION COVERS A NUMBER OF AREAS WE INSPECT
INCLUDING HEALTH, OUTCOMES, WORK WITH PARENTS
AND CARERS AND EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT**

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION – PREVENTING OFFENDING

Each inspection sampled a small number of prevention cases to ascertain how the YOT was developing the work with children and young people at risk of offending – largely in the eight to 13 age group, although some Youth Inclusion Projects were targeted at the 13-17 year olds. We would expect to see good partnership working with clear referral paths, assessments and targeted interventions sensitive to diversity and addressing safeguarding where it was applicable. Overall, the Youth Inclusion Programmes and the Youth Inclusion Support Panels should evaluate their work and be clear that the interventions are effective.

STRENGTHS

- A prevention strategy, supported by a wide range of partner agencies, with clear information sharing arrangements, designed to tackle offending and antisocial behaviour
- Long-term funding streams from a variety of sources to develop targeted projects
- Clear criteria and referral routes through which a wide range of agencies, organisations and parents/carers would refer
- Consistent and thorough use and review of Onset assessment, with attention given to both Risk of Harm and safeguarding issues, completion and use of *Over to you* self-assessment by the child or young person
- Committed and enthusiastic staff who were clear as to their role and boundaries
- Good quality and easily accessible parenting involvement, support and programmes
- Joint working with schools, often including restorative justice approaches, the youth service and in several areas the local professional football club(s), an army regiment and the fire and rescue service
- A wide range of targeted and evaluated interventions for children and young people which tackled both offending behaviour and engaged them in diversion activities such as arts and drama appropriate to their particular needs, e.g. girls and young women, Looked After Children and disadvantaged groups
- Clear exit strategies including mentoring which supported the child or young person once the intervention had finished
- Measured outcomes including a reduction in the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Little agency cooperation, with unclear guidance on information sharing between agencies
- Short-term funding streams which created anxiety about viability
- Unacceptable delays in processing referrals
- Lack of Risk of Harm assessments
- Few clear outcome objectives in intervention plans with reviews of progress
- A 'one size fits all' approach with little consideration of individual and diverse needs
- Lack of clarity regarding the length of intervention.

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GOOD PRACTICE

The YOT had been involved with the Community Safety Partnership and a professional football club in developing a football league, called the 'Ball Court League'. One of the police officers acted as coach to the league which aimed to offer sporting activity to children and young people who may otherwise be involved in antisocial behaviour. The league was open to children and young people who formed themselves into teams to compete. In addition to points being awarded for success in matches, points were also dependent on good behaviour both on the pitch and outside the matches. Points were deducted for reports of antisocial or criminal behaviour. Winners were awarded with match tickets for the professional football games. (Bexley)

The YOT had in place a summer creative preventative programme in partnership with an independent professional theatre group and a local authority supported performing arts group funded by the Community Safety Partnership. The scheme offered 12 places for children and young people aged 13-16 who had been involved in, or were at risk of, offending. Following a weekly drama programme throughout the year, those referred were involved in an intensive ten day course, where they created and performed an original drama which reflected sensitively about issues such as crime, violence, alcohol and abuse.

The project was evaluated by the partners and was assessed as successful following the attendees indicating that they had reduced their offending and attitude to offending, were more confident, had improved self-esteem and showed they were far more capable than they had at first thought. The arrangements were to be repeated for the next two summer holidays. (Ceredigion)

The Fairplay Football Initiative was a partnership with the youth service, Antisocial Behaviour Unit, police and Lincoln City Football Club. It was formed to tackle antisocial behaviour in the Lincoln area. Six-a-side teams were set up to play on Friday evenings, employing the values of fair play on the pitch and fair play off the pitch in the community. Each team had a mentor who challenged negative behaviour. Evaluation showed a reduction in antisocial behaviour and had been rolled out to other areas. (Lincolnshire)

The SPARKS programme, an intervention delivered by Humberside Fire Service, was aimed at improving life chances of participants by using the modern day fire-fighter as a role model. The programme accepted referrals from the Youth Inclusion Support Panel and was based on punctuality, good attendance and team building. Twelve Bronze Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network awards – a nationally recognised scheme – had been given to successful participants, nine referred from the Youth Inclusion Support Panel. Two children and young people had been invited to become peer mentors in other SPARKS events. (North East Lincolnshire)

The YOT and BASE 25 (a multi-agency public and voluntary sector organisation that provided help, support, education and treatment for children and young people with substance misuse problems from the age of 11 to 25) worked in partnership to deliver a girls' and young women's group aimed at developing confidence, self-esteem and encourage greater self-awareness. It was targeted at those aged 11 to 16 years. Participants were referred from a variety of agencies including Connexions, family centres and New Cross Hospital. Many of the referrals were made as a result of experiences of bullying, self-harming or risky sexual behaviour:

The programme used a range of techniques including increasing knowledge via presentations from guest speakers. The girls and young women also took part in a two day teen pregnancy deterrence exercise that included caring for a simulated baby. (Wolverhampton)

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFFENDED

In the 31 YOTs visited we inspected 1,001 files. Primarily final warnings, referral orders and supervision orders, 11% of the cases were Looked After Children. Whilst only a small proportion were on the child protection register, a fifth of all cases examined were considered vulnerable to harm, either from themselves or from others.

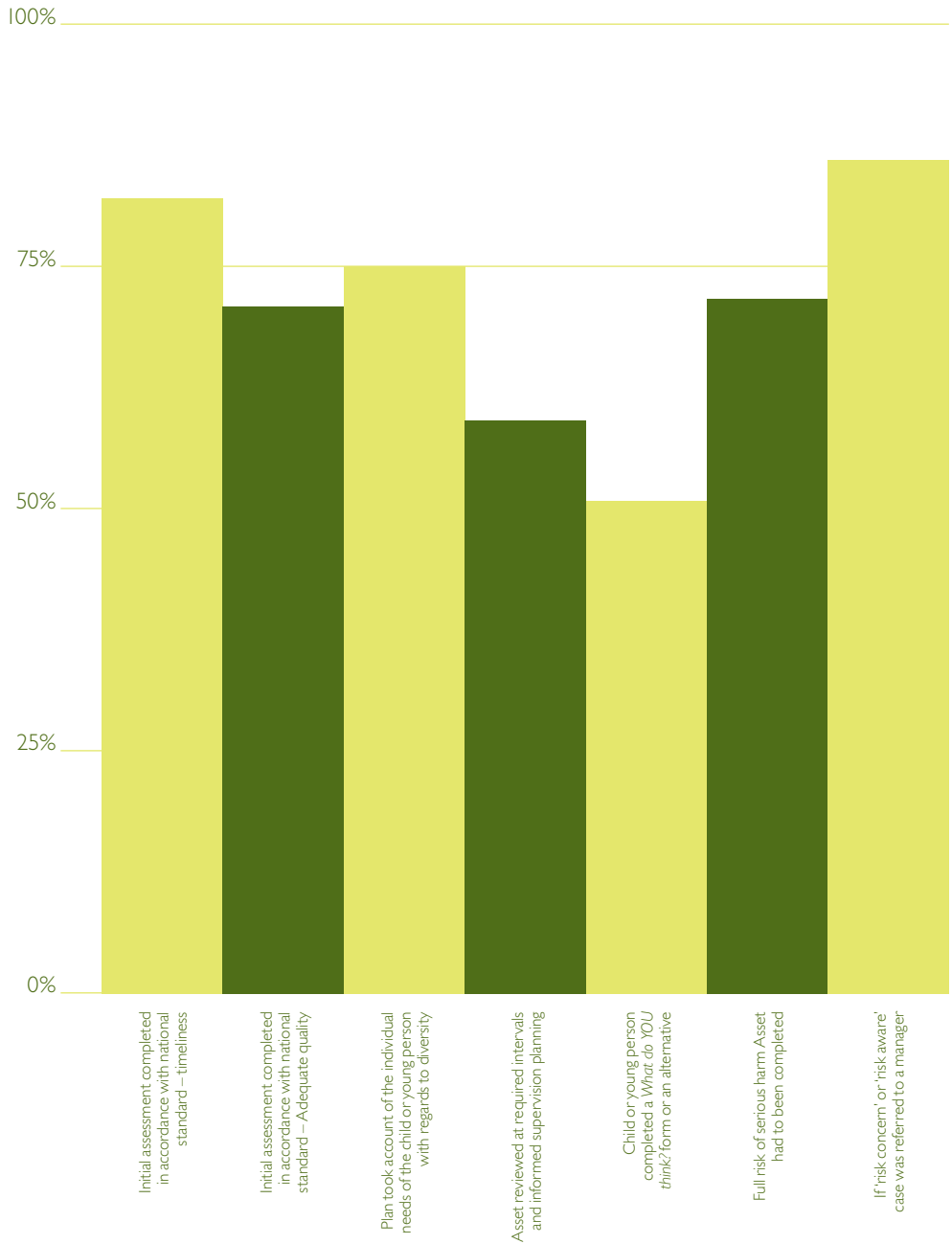
When inspecting files and interviewing case managers, we are primarily looking at a four stage process – assessment, planning, interventions and outcomes.

ASSESSMENT

We expect to see a fully completed Youth Justice Board assessment tool, Asset, at the start of contact with a child or young person. This should take into account diversity, safeguarding and include an assessment of Risk of Harm to others.

- Almost three-quarters of initial assessments were considered to be of adequate quality, with the majority taking into account the child or young person's specific needs in relation to diversity
- Three-quarters of the *What do YOU think?* self-assessments were completed by a child or young person. Unfortunately, we rarely saw this used well in the overall assessment process. In our experience children and young people are often very good at understanding themselves and can make a considerable contribution to their own supervision
- The completion rate of a full risk of serious harm to others has remained static but there is a large increase over last year in the number of cases referred to a manager
- Inspection staff agreed with the Risk of Harm classification in 84% of cases.

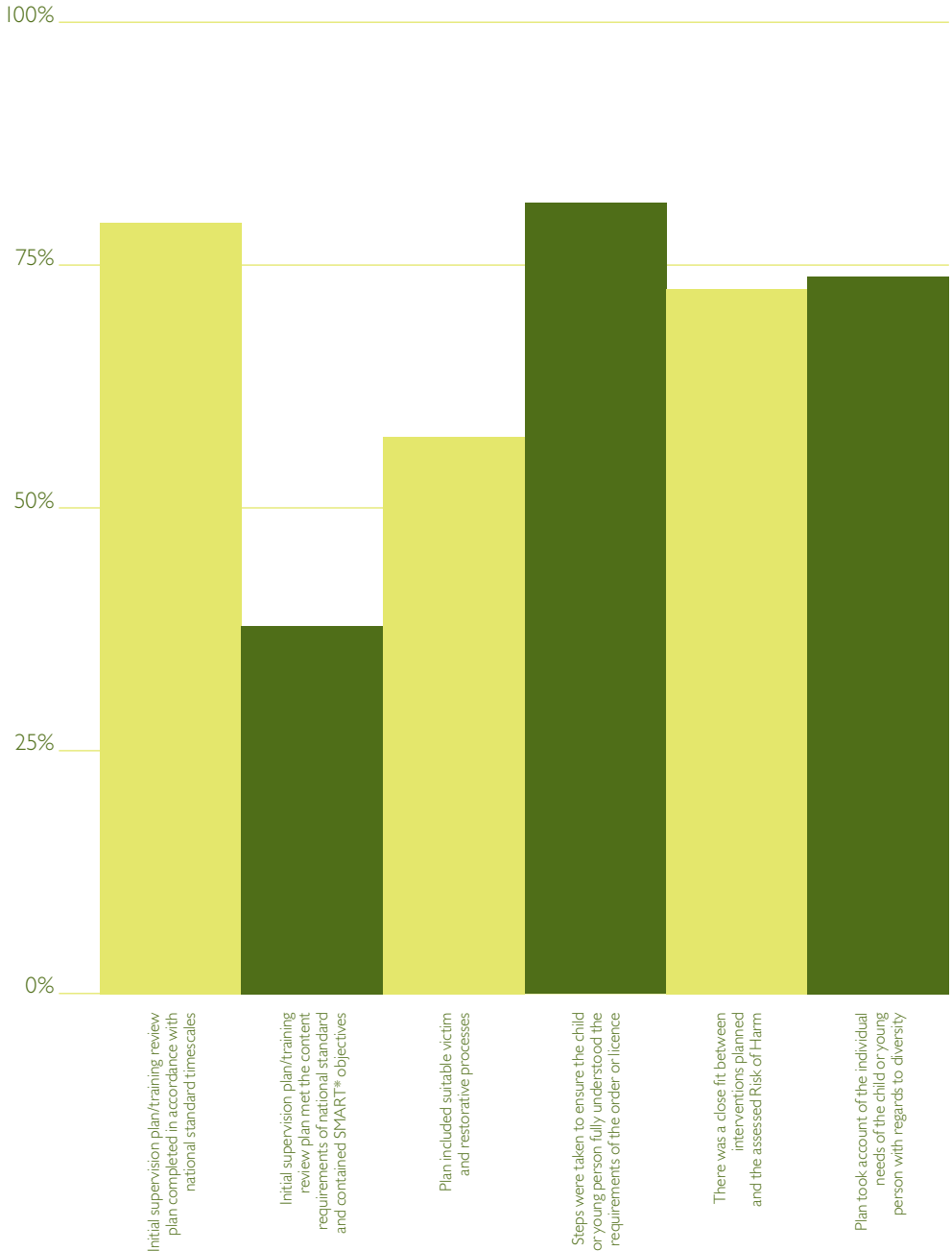
ASSESSMENT



PLANNING

In the planning stage we would expect to see objectives which emerge from the assessment, linked to the Risk of Harm and with an overall aim of reducing the likelihood of offending. This would be focused through specific measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bounded objectives. We encourage the breaking down of long-term objectives into small 'bite size' chunks, so that a child or young person can see how they are moving forward and achieving change in their lives. We were pleased to see that in almost three-quarters of cases the plan took account of the diversity needs of the child or young person.

PLANNING



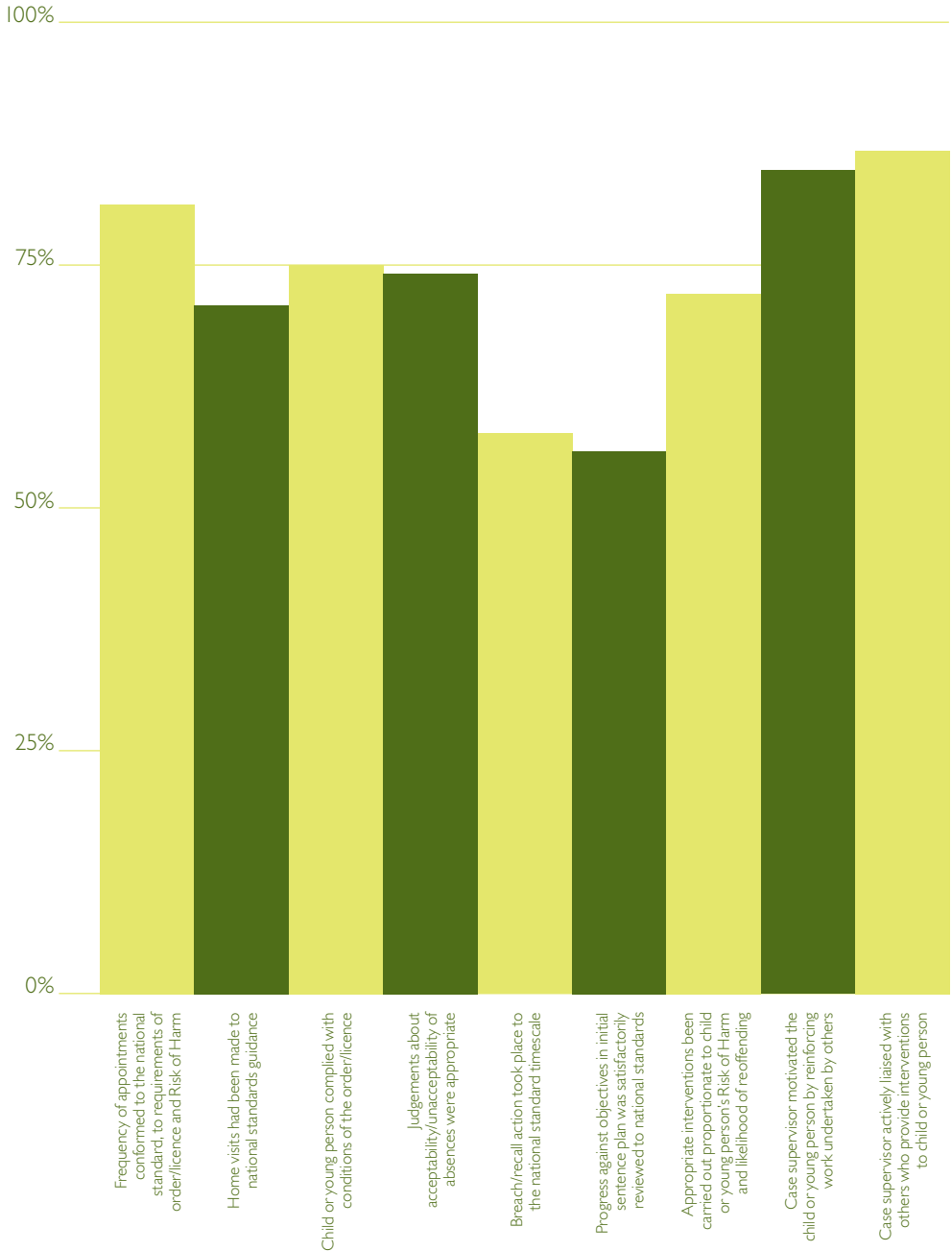
*SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bounded

INTERVENTIONS

Our criteria outline that we expect interventions to address offending behaviour and be consistent with the principles of effective practice. They should be inclusive and address diverse needs. In order to deliver interventions, appointments need to be in line with or better than national standards with timely enforcement activity if there is non-compliance. Given that the YOT is working with children and young people, we would expect to see imaginative ways of encouraging compliance, for example text messaging, as well as enforcement, when other forms of compliance measures do not work.

We have seen some excellent examples of imaginative interventions. What is sometimes missing is the targeting of interventions to take account of individual need and the evaluation of interventions to assess their effectiveness.

INTERVENTIONS

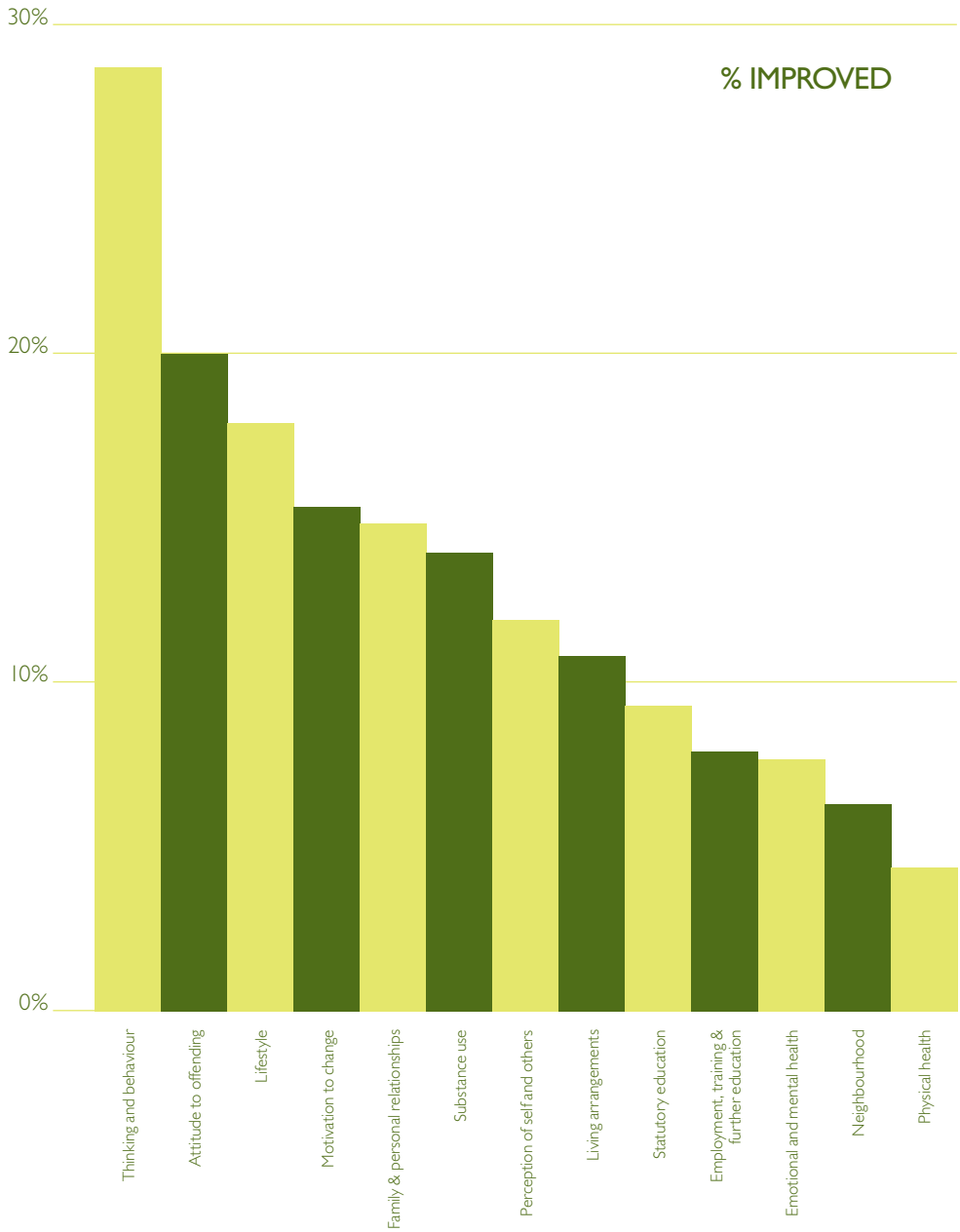


OUTCOMES

The purpose of interventions is to achieve a change in the behaviour of the child or young person, or to improve the situation for them – such as safeguarding. One of the ultimate outcome measures is a lack of further offending or a reduction in frequency or seriousness, but assessing over time can be a long process. However, we do ask about evidence of criminal activity whilst on the order or licence. In the last year, as in the previous year, there was no evidence of criminal activity in 70% of the cases inspected.

Progress and outputs can be demonstrated through the reassessment of Asset and the review of the supervision plan. Last year we saw improvements in 52% of Asset scores. The graph shows the areas of work which were undertaken and progress assessed on each one.

PROGRESS ON CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS



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GOOD PRACTICE

Each YOT team had money set aside in a 'Barriers Fund'. The purpose of this fund was to enable staff to overcome issues that might otherwise have prevented a positive outcome being achieved for a child or young person or a victim. For a child or young person this could contribute towards the cost of a college course, or for those working on avoiding drugs it may facilitate gym access to encourage a healthy lifestyle. For a victim, the restorative justice worker would make an assessment of individual or family needs and use the money to aid the recovery process. (Birmingham)

All new orders were the subject of Intervention Planning Meetings. These meetings were chaired by a manager and held in the YOT on a weekly basis. The purpose was to agree an intervention plan, to establish outcome focused objectives and engage input from the relevant specialist staff. Attendance by staff was a high priority and individual cases were allocated time slots. Reviews of supervision plans were subject to the same process. (Cheshire)

Recognising the rising numbers of Somali boys and young men involved in offending and represented in secure establishments, and in view of perceived lack of constructive leisure activities for this high-risk group, the YOS, the youth and Connexions services and the voluntary sector were jointly planning a Youth Club to start shortly. This would be based at a local centre, potentially two nights per week in partnership with Somali Community Leaders. (Ealing)

In order to tackle gang culture, staff had developed a firearms workshop. This was held at a police station, led by a firearms officer and designed for those children and young people who had been convicted of an offence involving a weapon. The programme included discussions about the risk of possessing such items and explained the likely consequences of possessing them. There was an opportunity to handle weapons safely, but dependent on a risk assessment by the firearms officer. A live demonstration by the officer showed the consequences of gun crime. (Bedfordshire)

The YOT had a number of good practice examples in relation to trying to secure access to appropriate accommodation for children and young people, particularly when the previous offending represented a high risk to others. One example was in relation to a young person who was due for discharge into the community. He had three previous convictions for arson and was also a possible risk to other children due to his previous convictions. The accommodation officer contacted all the local hostels and the accommodation forum but applications to all of these were refused due to his arson convictions.

The accommodation officer worked with a housing association in Birmingham to help undertake a thorough risk assessment. The YOT agreed that the detention and training order officer, the case manager and the YOT accommodation officer would continue to work with the young person on his release to add to the sense of continuity and enable him to get to know the new housing association staff.

The young person was accepted by the project. The YOT staff, following release, maintained contact and monitored progress. The young person had been resident for six months at the time of the inspection and had made good progress; importantly he had not reoffended. (Wolverhampton)

Charmaine was referred to the group worker in the YOS by her case manager at the start of her order for failing to comply with her order and the high Risk of Harm she presented to herself and others. She had been placed in a safe house as a result of being the victim of domestic abuse by her boyfriend, as well as concerns around her dealing in crack cocaine. The initial assessment confirmed that Charmaine needed to develop anger management skills, self-esteem, social skills and punctuality. She attended individual weekly sessions at the YOS over three months to address these issues. At the end of the work, Charmaine had developed her assertiveness, which had enabled her to end the relationship with her boyfriend, and resulted in the relationships with her family being repaired. She no longer lost her temper and behaved violently having learned relaxation techniques and alternative means of managing her anger. Her punctuality improved and she was accepted onto a college course in hairdressing. (Haringey)

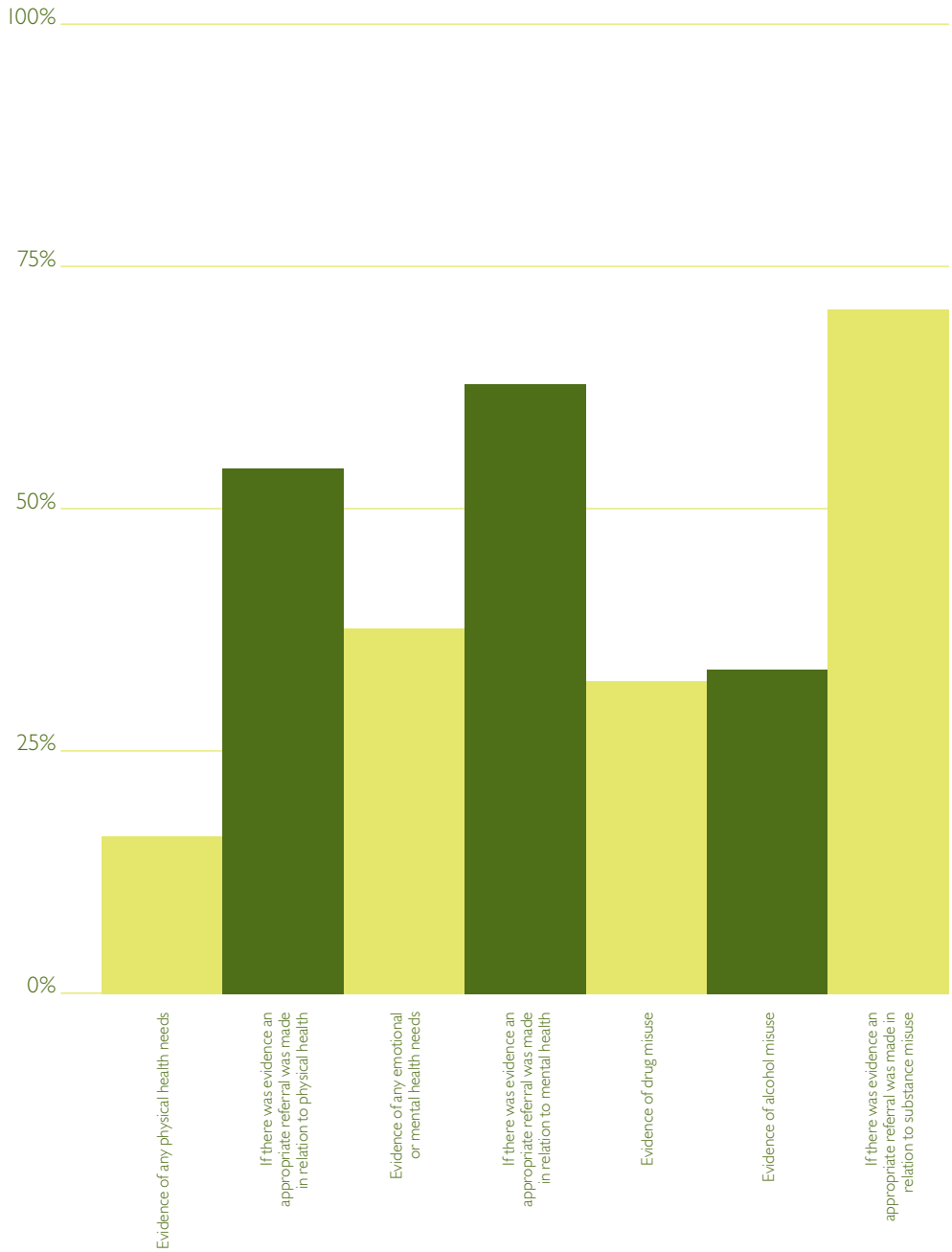
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HEALTH ISSUES – BE HEALTHY

We expect to see the YOT promoting the health of children and young people across the areas of physical health, mental health and substance misuse. This includes identifying problems and making appropriate referrals, undertaking specialist assessments, and ensuring access to services appropriate to their assessed needs, for example alcohol services and sexual health provision. The purpose of these interventions is to see evidence of improved health outcomes.

HEALTH



STRENGTHS

- Pro-active and regular attendance by the health representative on the Management Board
- Children and young people's health priorities and targets reflected in other plans and strategies such as the Children and Young People's Plan and Safer Communities Strategy
- Access to psychology services, either as a part-time member of staff or through visiting arrangements
- Clearly understood specialist referral criteria based on Asset scores
- Access to substance misuse services, with established screening arrangements
- Well-trained case managers able to undertake substance misuse, and mental health, screening
- Positive relationships between health and other YOT staff with clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Case manager staff untrained or unskilled in screening for physical health
- Physical health needs not addressed, with a lack of appropriately qualified, or trained, health staff to undertake assessments and refer to mainstream services
- Healthcare staff given other inappropriate duties which prevents or hinders them undertaking their specialist role, e.g. supervision of generic cases
- Insufficient provision such as part-time or temporary posts, vacancies or absences left unfilled, long recruitment processes
- Poor communication between health professionals and case managers exacerbated by separate file systems
- Management Board gaps in strategic health representation as a result of Board vacancies or lack of attendance by the health representative
- Inadequate or non-existent service level agreements and protocols between the YOT and various health providers
- A quarter of YOTs inspected were not resourced to Youth Justice Board expectations (at or above 5.8%)
- Little evidence of systematic and formal evaluation of outcomes from interventions.

GOOD PRACTICE

All children and young people seen by the substance misuse worker were offered Hepatitis B immunisation, and the nurse who provided this service also assessed and addressed any physical health need. (Harrow)

This borough YOT had negotiated and agreed a comprehensive and thorough service level agreement for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, which included a particularly clear section on confidentiality and information sharing. This was used by staff in both organisations to ensure that the services delivered were effective. (Kingston Upon Thames)

Y received a community order following numerous cases of assault. There were significant mental health and emotional health issues. Variations to reporting requirements were agreed to assist the management of the mental health issues. Verbal communication was extremely difficult. Therefore, YOS workers communicated with Y by email. In order to ensure the engagement of Y in the development of the supervision plan, he wrote each element himself as a contract, each contract being signed and kept on file. (North East Lincolnshire)

One afternoon a week the YOS held a drop in for children and young people associated with the YOS. The health worker was one of the specialist staff from the resource team who was available on a non-appointment basis to give advice and support. A significant number of children and young people used this session to request help from the health worker on issues including emergency contraception and sexual health. Accommodation and training advice was also offered by specialist staff. (Rotherham)

The universal health screening pilot provided access to family planning services, a sexually transmitted disease clinic, genitourinary medicine, general practitioners and dentists. There was also a proposal to access the Wolverhampton Young Men's Sexual Health Clinic provided by the Primary Care Trust to access sexual health and contraception training. The nurse also provided pregnancy testing and support to young people for emergency contraception. (Wolverhampton)

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SAFEGUARDING – STAY SAFE

In this area we would be looking for a full assessment of Risk of Harm – to self and to/from others, clear links to children's social care services, joint working around Looked After Children and interventions taking account of safeguarding. Of all the cases assessed the inspection staff considered 21% vulnerable to harm from themselves and 20% vulnerable to harm from others.

3% were on the child protection register. This emphasises the need for all staff to be vigilant and have knowledge and skills to identify and act on safeguarding issues.

STRENGTHS

- Clear protocols in place between the YOT and children's social care services which defined thresholds for referrals and clarity about each organisation's responsibilities particularly in relation to Looked After Children
- YOT manager an active member of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Direct access by the YOT to the children's social care services database
- Links to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements in respect of safeguarding children
- Team members and volunteers received training in relation to safeguarding and child protection
- Clear arrangements and treatment programmes for children and young people who had been involved in sexual offending.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Unsuitable accommodation such as bed and breakfast facility which left children and young people vulnerable from others
- Lack of internal risk management procedures
- Just under a third of YOTs had not undertaken home visits in accordance with national standards
- 11% of the cases we have inspected have been Looked After Children. In 94% of these cases, children's social care services had been involved or consulted during the supervision period.

GOOD PRACTICE

C lived in a children's home, was on a supervision order for assault and was correctly assessed medium risk. A multi-agency risk management plan was produced involving both YOT and social services. The plan addressed offending related issues but also aspects of behaviour in the care home. (Wigan)

The court operational manager had noted an increase in the number of Looked After Children in court despite the overall number of them in care decreasing. By reviewing information, it was evident that the increase was in cases of violence against the person and originated from residential homes. The court operational manager wrote a paper stating the number of cases per residential home, with the recommendation of improved communication between the YOS and residential managers and clear guidance from the police regarding their involvement. The situation continues to be under review and is awaiting discussions with the Crown Prosecution Service. (Rotherham)

ACHIEVING POTENTIAL THROUGH EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND EDUCATION – ENJOY AND ACHIEVE, AND ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL BEING

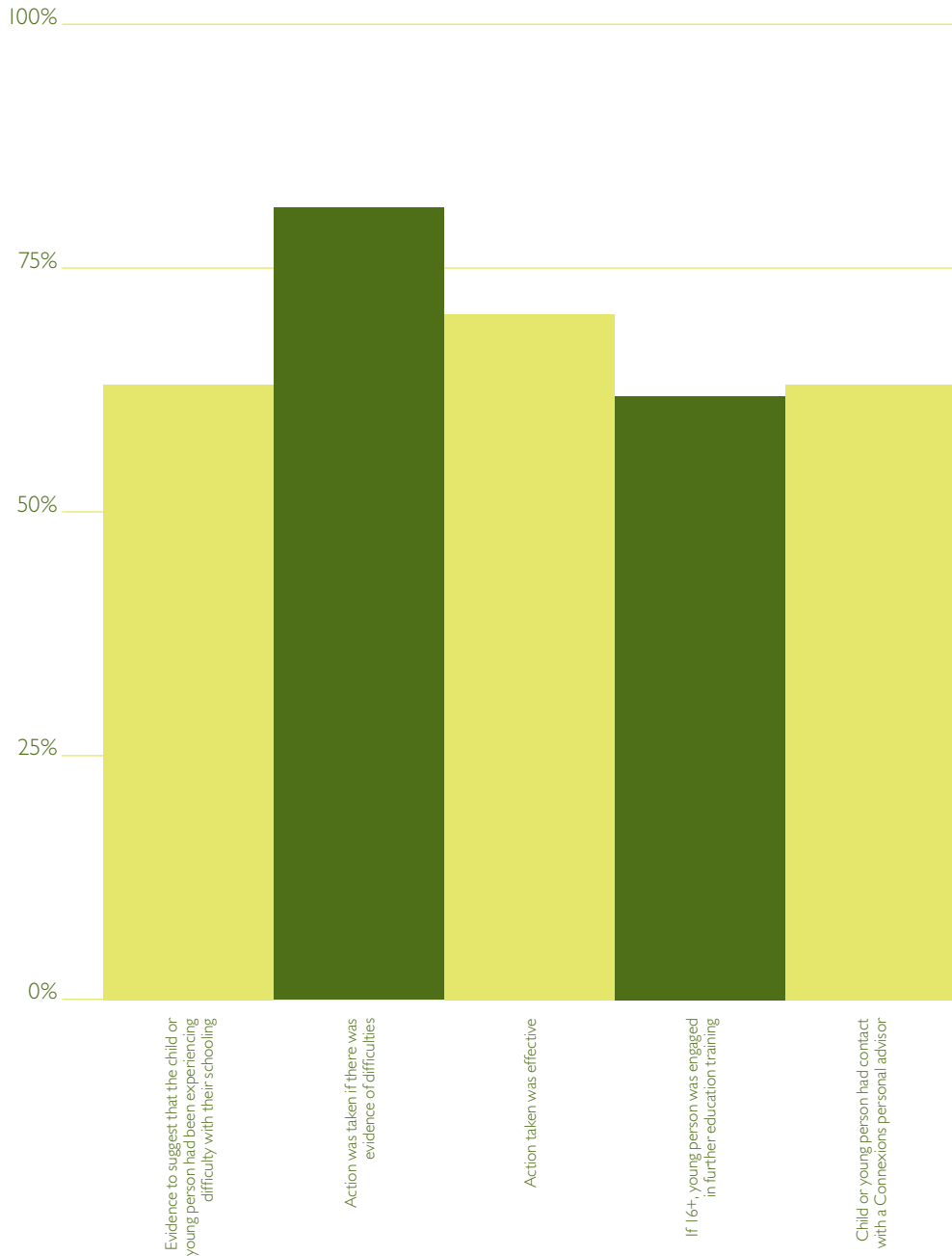
Almost two-thirds of children and young people who had offended had difficulty with their schooling. Half of those were permanently excluded and problems included bullying (35%), occasional truanting (36%), frequent truanting (54%) and school refusal (33%).

Given the high frequency of educational problems for those children and young people involved with the YOT, we expect YOTs to demonstrate that specialist assessments of basic skills and learning styles are fully implemented at the earliest opportunity. Children and young people should be supported in securing employment, training or education provision most appropriate to meet their individual needs.

This includes providing interventions which promote attainment and progression in line with assessed educational need, action for those excluded from school to attend alternative education settings or reintegration back into mainstream provision, and the appropriate support to children and young people and their parents/carers to achieve and sustain positive outcomes.

Whilst there were variations in our findings across England and Wales, our view is that there is an improving picture overall in relation to education staffing and provision.

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STRENGTHS

- Strong partnership arrangements in which local authority personnel and YOT staff worked effectively to find suitable alternative education placements for those children and young people of school age
- Substantial involvement with schools by YOT staff in supporting restorative justice solutions to improve attendance and behaviour and prevent or reduce exclusions
- Well resourced and good collaboration between other partners and agencies including education welfare, schools, Connexions or Career Wales to ensure referral pathways were clear and provision was well matched to children and young people's needs
- Active attendance and representation by the local authority and Connexions on the Management Board.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Lack of formalised systems and approaches for assessing the literacy and numeracy needs and learning styles of children and young people on their entry to the YOT
- Limited post-16 placements at pre-entry, entry level and Level 1 in employment, training and education
- Further education colleges with an inflexible approach to intake arrangements greatly limited options for children and young people requiring placements mid-term and mid-year
- Educational 'drift' for many children and young people where the 25 hours statutory entitlement to education provision was not being offered or implemented
- Poor monitoring of educational performance and tracking children and young people's progress through their period with the YOT (including secure establishment sentences)
- Staff recruited to education roles where they were untrained, inexperienced and therefore ill-equipped to perform the role
- Education staff with large generic caseloads untrained and equally ill-equipped to fulfil the role; consequently, and most importantly, thus diverted from undertaking their specialist education function
- Lack of training for case managers in educational matters including an awareness and understanding of educational needs of children and young people, and specifically regarding basic skills and learning styles.

GOOD PRACTICE

When a young person was without mainstream education, the YOT intervention enabled and supported obtaining a new school place. This placement, however, failed because of bullying experienced by this young person. The YOT then arranged a meeting of all agencies involved and the parents. Funding was secured for the pupil to undertake her General Certificate in Secondary Education studies at the local further education college. The pupil was successful in gaining good outcomes and was intending to continue her education beyond the statutory requirement. (Bromley)

YOS based Connexions personal advisors continued to work with children and young people up to three months beyond the end of their court order if they were still in the 'not in education, employment or training' group. This ensured the continuity of service for the child or young person before they were transferred to a community based personal advisor. (Birmingham)

Local schools valued the input from the YOT education worker. An advice and consultancy service was made available to children and young people and teachers when difficulties were raised. One example of this work concerned a diversionary project at a local community college. A group of children and young people had been displaying worrying behaviour and were at risk of being excluded. The programme developed included a visit to a local prison, discussion, video and small group work. As a consequence, one of the at risk group became a senior prefect and none were excluded from school. (Kingston Upon Thames)

Treatment and Education Drugs Services were working with a 16 year old with special needs, who could not read or write. Drug education was provided by way of pictures and drawings done in partnership with the young person. He understood the health risks of excessive drinking and had not relapsed. A drugs card game based on the top trump game had been developed. It was at the pilot stage but had been well received by the young person who found the cards useful, not only to get information but also as a way to start talking about their drugs problems to their peers and professionals. (Rhondda Cynon Taf)

The limited introduction of a programme called 'Touch, Type, Spell' for children and young people with literacy problems had had a major impact on one young person who, having failed to engage with a variety of educational establishments before he was 16, now attended the YOT three times a week to take part in the learning programme. (Kensington and Chelsea)

WORK WITH PARENTS/CARERS

This work can be undertaken on a voluntary basis, or as a parenting order. The majority of cases we inspected had voluntary involvement with a court order reserved for those few cases where previous attempts at engagement were not successful. Our criteria cover assessments of parenting skills, parents/carers being made aware of the requirements of interventions and progress, and being sensitive to their diverse needs. We expect to see them being supported in addressing their children's behaviour and that effective parenting is promoted to care, control and safeguard the child or young person.

We were surprised that only 13% of all the cases inspected had a current parenting intervention. Of those, 85% were considered to be appropriate to the diversity needs of the parent/carer. However, our other data indicated that although parents/carers may not have had a specific parenting intervention, they were generally involved with the YOT – for example, 88% were involved in the assessment of the child or young person (usually Asset) and in 89% of cases this reflected the individual needs identified by the parent/carer. Throughout the order they were kept informed of the developments relating to the child or young person.

STRENGTHS

- Imaginative sources of funding and links with other local initiatives
- Clear procedures for assessment and intervention using threshold Asset scores on the personal and family relationships section to trigger a referral
- Use of a self-assessment *What do YOU think as a parent?*
- The availability of parenting information packs, website and downloadable leaflets. Sensitivity to the individual needs of the parents/carers including transport, disabled access, crèche facilities, interpreters with no-one disadvantaged as a result of lack of literacy skills
- A range of different initiatives including one-to-one work, restorative justice, family group conferencing and parallel working with parents/carers and children
- An emphasis on voluntary interventions, with some continuing support if necessary after the child or young person's order had been completed.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Insufficient funding and capacity to address all the parents/carers' needs
- Little attention given to engaging fathers in interventions
- Ad hoc referral rather than systematic assessment of all parents/carers.

PARENTS' COMMENTS

"Gives you another way of dealing with problems."

"Can get it off your chest."

"I now listen to my kid rather than talk at him."

"I try and separate the child and the behaviour." (Newcastle-upon-Tyne)

"Helped me to take control of me."

"Makes you feel stronger."

"Sees things from the point of view of the child."

"Gives you more confidence." (Greenwich)

"When they became involved I thought it was going to be awful but they helped me with my children and did not make me feel inadequate in any way."

"They're very good and non-judgemental." (Cambridge)

GOOD PRACTICE

Crèche facilities were available for pre-school age children and travel fares were provided. The current group had maintained all 17 parents/carers and included four men. There was provision for an interpreter. The YOS planned to train five Youth Offending Service officers in facilitating the parenting programme to increase capacity and knowledge of the work. (Ealing)

The YOS was asked to take part in a Theatr Florwm Cymru pilot to improve children and young people's emotional literacy. One way they used the project was with a large family group, where family members had great difficulty expressing themselves within their family setting. The structure of the day allowed family members to speak and be listened to on an individual basis. This had improved communication skills within the family and helped them understand each other's needs. (Rhondda Cynon Taf)

A 'dads' parenting group had been established in July 2006 and meetings were held monthly. The inspection team spoke to participants during a meeting and all stated that the sessions had been beneficial. One said that by sharing experiences with staff and other fathers, he had been able to improve how he communicated with his daughter, which had made a significant difference to his relationship with her. The needs of the group were met through a variety of inputs, including communication and drug education. (Bedfordshire)

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OUTCOMES AND CONSULTATION

In our examination of case files we want to see evidence of progress, demonstrated for example by improved family relationships, health outcomes, educational attainment and reduced vulnerability, along with improved attitudes towards, and a reduction in, offending. We also believe that children and young people should be consulted about improvements in service and be able to see that their suggestions can make a difference to the quality of service provision.

STRENGTHS

- Information leaflets were provided for children and young people that explained the different types of orders and the programmes available. Leaflets were also available in other languages. Interactive websites elicited their views
- *What do YOU think?* and *Over to you* were used to influence the supervision plan
- Feedback forms were provided for children and young people following participation in programme sessions
- Some YOTs conducted their own research with children and young people (or invited others to do so) which informed policy and practice
- A culture of encouraging children and young people to participate in the development of the services resulted in an annual report on the findings or in other areas a newsletter; and changes in practice in the YOT, e.g. as a number of children and young people had reported witnessing violence in the home, the YOT increased the level of home visiting to be able to monitor this better.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- There was no clear strategy for the development of consultation with service users
- No plans were in place to seek the views of children and young people from black and minority ethnic groups
- Feedback was sought from children and young people, but not collated and used to improve practice
- Some YOTs did not reassess or re-score Asset and so had little systematic evidence about progress on orders.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CONSULTATION

Children and young people at the end of all orders were encouraged to give feedback on their time with the YOS by taking part voluntarily in the *Have your say* questionnaire. The voice and influence officer was responsible for arranging interviews to gather the views of children and young people in order that they could inform service delivery. They prepared regular reports for YOS management meetings on feedback from the questionnaires with recommendations for service improvement. Four reports had been submitted to date. They also produced a newsletter for children and young people to feedback the results of the consultation process. Children and young people in the *Have your say* questionnaire had said that they found the YOS waiting room intimidating. Following this feedback the YOS management team decided to redesign the waiting area which reduced inter-personal trouble and graffiti in the area. (Rotherham)

The YOT have previously involved young people in the staff recruitment process through a young people's selection panel. This involved the young people developing a fictitious character for use in a role play interview and participating in the actual role play. (Wolverhampton)

One child or young person who completed Viewpoint for the inspection wrote: "The things I do at YOS are very constructive and make sense. They make me think about many things not only about what I did but what I learn. The reparation which I did has improved my knowledge and thinking of Greenwich. I have learnt a valuable lesson." (Greenwich)

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FEEDBACK ABOUT THE YOT FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE TIME OF THE INSPECTION:

"Give advice and help you look at things differently."

"Make me think in a different way."

"Made me stop hanging round the streets."

"Treats me respectfully."

"Makes me more enthusiastic about my work at college."

"Give advice on how to stay out of trouble."

(Haringey)

"Give me gym and provide me with activities like football and so on."

"Let me talk about things."

"Be able to talk truthfully about my opinion on drugs."

"Like doing gym and one-to-one talks because I can say what I think and let out my feelings."

"Helped me to change."

"Made me think."

(Kensington and Chelsea)

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DETENTION AND TRAINING ORDERS

In this part of the inspection we expect to see good communication between the YOT and the secure establishment, with copies of all relevant documents arriving at the establishment within 24 hours and any other more urgent information (such as vulnerability or harm to others concerns, medical details) faxed or emailed and confirmed by telephone. The YOT case supervisor should attend and contribute to the training plan meetings, encourage attendance by parents/carers, ensure provision is made to meet individual needs and start to plan for release.

DURING THE CUSTODIAL PERIOD

STRENGTHS

- Staff were available to interview the child or young person in the court cells shortly after sentence
- Specific risk factors were highlighted and communicated immediately with other documents (including all recent assessments) following closely behind
- There was clear practice guidance about what was expected of YOT staff in relation to the establishment, and protocols with institutions about what they could expect from the YOT
- Regular attendance and proactive participation at planning meetings by YOT workers, education staff (who made links with education staff in the institution) and other YOT workers where appropriate
- Training plan meetings were informed by Asset and designed to meet diversity needs, including particular care to the needs of children and young people from Wales placed in English establishments
- YOT staff undertook visits and communications (telephone calls, letters, electronic mail) in line with or beyond national standards, and during visits undertook sessions with the child or young person in support of work being undertaken on the Young Offender Institution programmes
- Where vulnerability had been identified, appropriate action had been taken and there was regular communication with children's social care services
- Referrals to address health related needs had been made where this was relevant
- YOT staff actively facilitated parents/carers' attendance at planning meetings by offering support with transport, fares and childcare, encouraged contact between children and young people and parents/carers and maintained close links with the family throughout, including an early follow-up visit post sentence

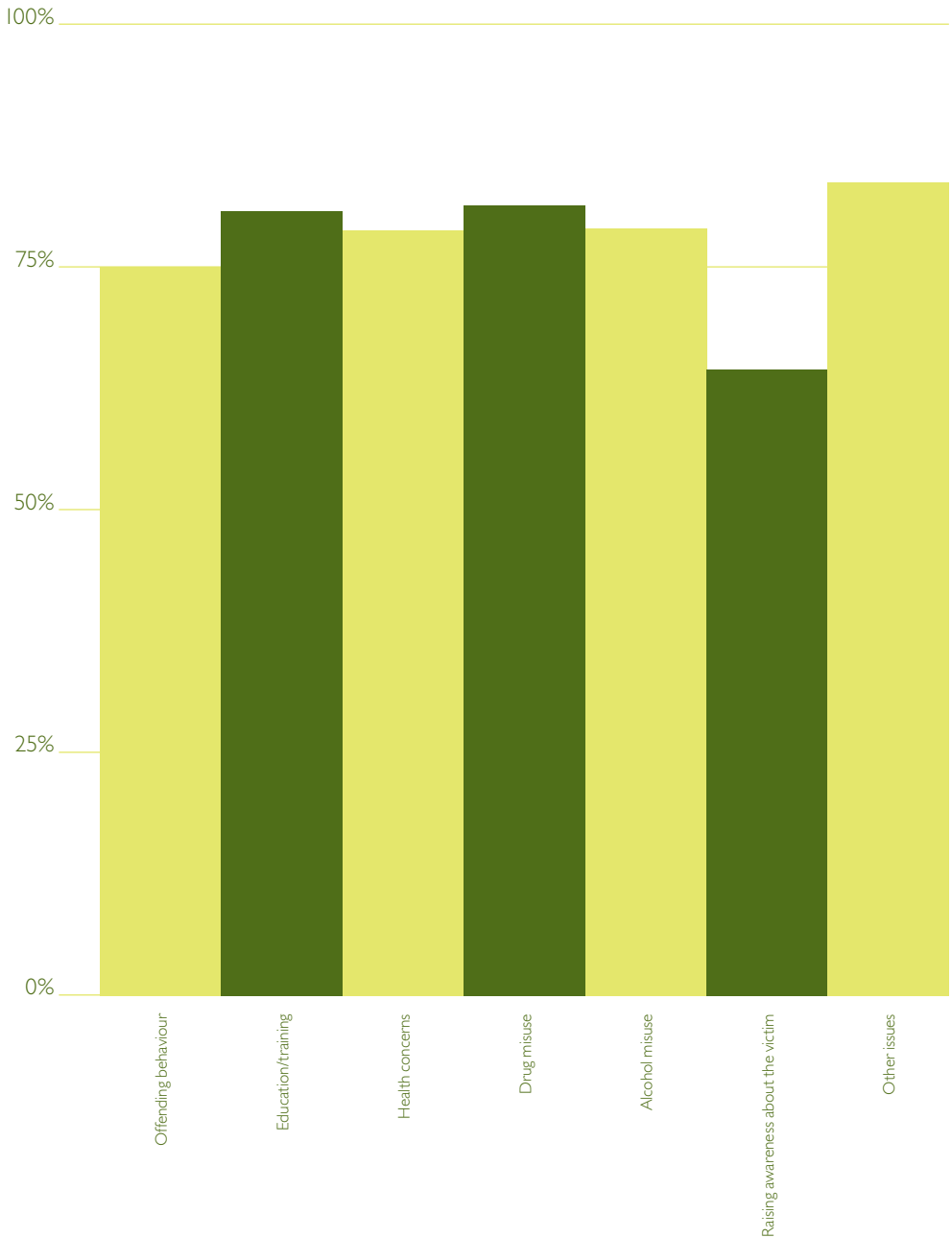
- The quality and type of work undertaken directly linked to the original assessment(s) and the training plan
- There was regular contact between YOT staff and key custodial personnel
- Accommodation needs were assessed and monitored in preparation for release, including in some cases children's social care and housing providers visiting the child or young person in the secure establishment to undertake joint assessments.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Lack of contact with children's social care services
- Little contact with children and young people in secure establishments and few or no links developed with staff in the institutions
- *What do YOU think?* was not used as part of the assessment process
- Employment, training and education communication was poor and lacked continuity
- Initial training plan did not meet the requirements of national standards nor had specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bounded objectives.

CUSTODIAL CASES: DELIVERING APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS

Work that started in custody relating to these issues continued in the community following release



DURING THE COMMUNITY PHASE

STRENGTHS

- The same worker was responsible for both elements of the custodial sentence, and in some cases had also written the pre-sentence report
- Arrangements were established prior to release to meet the child or young person's health and employment, training or education needs, including contact with the Connexions personal advisor
- A multi-agency panel coordinated the resettlement needs of children and young people in secure establishments, with specialist staff meeting the child or young person prior to release
- Parents/carers were kept fully informed and involved in throughcare and release plans
- A known YOT member of staff collected the child or young person from the establishment on discharge into the community
- The requirements of the licence were clearly explained and the frequency of appointments arranged conformed to the national standard and the assessed Risk of Harm
- Victim issues had a high profile and were addressed during supervision
- Flexible programmes were tailored to individuals and used to promote personal responsibility and constructive use of leisure time for those with substance misuse issues.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- There were difficulties placing children and young people in suitable accommodation on release
- Reassessment of literacy and numeracy was not undertaken at the end of the custodial phase and individual learning plans were not updated
- Children and young people were taken off the school roll if the sentence was over four months and there were no protocols or agreements for reintegration on release
- A lack of suitable employment, training or education placements was frequently a problem for those released from secure establishments.

GOOD PRACTICE

Agreements had been reached with both HM Young Offender Institution Castington and Hassocksfield Secure Training Centre for a 'revolving door' project. The scheme aimed to develop working practice to ensure greater continuity between secure establishments and the community. Prison officers continued their relationship with particularly vulnerable children and young people on their release by visiting them in the community and reinforcing some of the work undertaken with them whilst in custody. (Sunderland)

One young person subject to a detention and training order was displaying significant vulnerability issues including self-harm and emotional distress. The Young Offender Institution and YOT Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services workers, with support of the psychiatric services, managed the risk issues and developed an extensive set of licence conditions with associated action points for her release. The risk management plan for release was extensive and included hostel residence, substance misuse work, psychiatric and psychological appointments, the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme and victim protection work. The young woman found it difficult to cope and was recalled on breach of the conditions. However this practice represented a thorough approach to risk management that involved all the agencies working together and being clear about who would deliver which elements of the risk management and vulnerability plans. (Wolverhampton)

Keeping Young People Engaged provided a proactive partnership focusing on those serving detention and training orders. Examples of good partnership working were evidenced including:-

"D was serving a four month sentence. The Keeping Young People Engaged worker and the YOT Social Inclusion and Pupil Support worker visited him to assess his past experience of school and how he would cope with education on his release. He expressed feelings of apprehension about returning to education. Keeping Young People Engaged staff liaised with the secure training centre and set up a pre-admissions meeting. Release on temporary licence was arranged in order for D to attend. Keeping Young People Engaged worked closely with D's mum and supported her in attending this meeting. The meeting identified the subjects and activities for D. The YOT and Keeping Young People Engaged made plans to collect D on the day of his release and to continue to support him in terms of his education and resettlement needs." (Wolverhampton)

WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This part of the inspection seeks to look at the how the YOT works with victims. It covers how staff try to engage the victim in restorative justice processes, what happens when they do in terms of whether the intervention is tailored to both their needs and those of the perpetrator, and whether the victim is satisfied with the work undertaken. Evidence is collected as part of the file assessment process but also through interviews with victims.

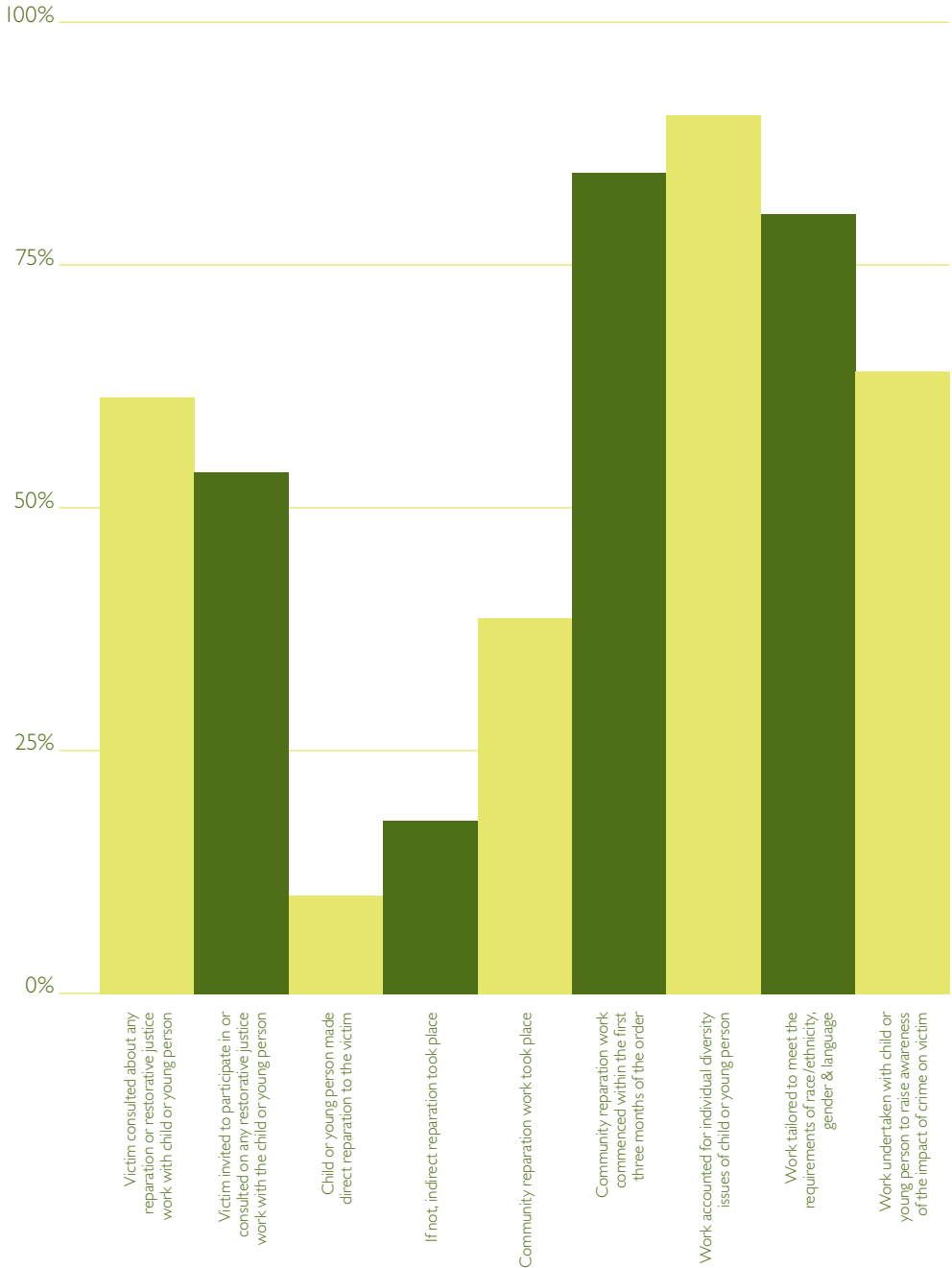
Whilst contact with victims is most often visible in final warnings and referral orders, Youth Justice Board standards include restorative justice processes and consideration as to the needs of the victim in most other orders too (National Standard 8). Emphasis is on the voluntary nature of the process for the victim.

Not all crimes will have an identifiable victim, living locally, who is willing to be involved in restorative justice processes. But, how victims are approached is likely to have an impact on how they respond initially and whether they stay engaged in the process.

Of 302 final warning cases in our sample, 51 victims (17%) participated in the process. This participation included direct, indirect and community reparation. Where victims participated and files were available to the inspection team, 75% were satisfied with the process and their involvement.

In a quarter of final warning cases victims' details were not notified to the YOT by the police. Of the remainder, just under half the victims were invited to become involved in the process. This figure is slightly higher for Youth Offender Panels (the panels which determine the contract and content of work to be undertaken by the child or young person after they have received a referral order). In 23 cases from 271 orders, the victim attended the panel. This constitutes 8% of the total orders but 16% of those invited.

WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



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STRENGTHS

- Some YOTs used video recording to capture victims' views for work with the child or young person and also to enable apologies to be made; on other occasions victim impact statements were used when the victim did not want to have direct contact with the perpetrator
- Restorative justice workers were personable, reliable and clear about communication. They delivered as they said they would to instil confidence in the process, and trained all staff in victim awareness and restorative justice principles
- YOTs worked effectively in schools and residential units to introduce the principles of restorative justice and prevent school exclusion and criminalisation
- Some children and young people had been trained in peer mediation
- The restorative justice team was proactive in promoting restorative justice and training a large number of staff in other agencies such as the police and behaviour support teams
- YOTs worked closely with Victim Support, some of whom provided specialist support to young victims of crime, and other support agencies for victims of crime such as Women's Aid and the Child Victims of Crime Compensation Scheme
- Youth Offender Panels were arranged to suit the needs of the victim, including outside the borough when appropriate
- Reparation work was done in conjunction with the local authority departments, and included a variety of projects embedding learning into the tasks undertaken
- The YOT was proactive in securing funding from various sources and ensuring appropriate publicity for the work
- A female reparation worker was employed to work specifically with girls and young women, and account was taken of the diversity needs of the victim and the perpetrator
- Health and safety practices and safeguarding were given due attention.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Case supervisors were not aware of work with the victim – with a low use of the Youth Offending Information System victim record screens
- The frequency of police notification to the YOT of victims' details was not sufficient
- There was no standardised assessment tool to help understand victims' diverse needs
- In some cases there was little evidence of victim awareness work being undertaken by case supervisors.

GOOD PRACTICE – VICTIMS

A reparation project based at a Salvation Army lunch club was a good placement for children and young people offering a range of social interaction and learning. They helped prepare meals, set tables and serve lunch to between 20 and 25 older people. Occasionally other tasks such as painting and decorating were completed. Five had been successfully placed at the project and a good match between the individual child or young person and the placement had been achieved. The YOT sought regular feedback about their progress. The young person who was currently working at the project was positive about the placement which he described as 'calm'. What he enjoyed most was the 'smiles and the thank you' he received from the recipients. (Kensington and Chelsea)

A pilot restorative justice scheme was in place in children's homes in the borough involving the YOT to try and reduce the number of incidents where Looked After Children were prosecuted. A draft procedure was produced in response to the Crown Prosecution Service's guidance for dealing with offences committed by children and young people in children's home in the borough. Incidents of a minor nature would be managed using a restorative justice approach. After an incident the victim liaison officer would make an assessment of the situation and, in agreement with the parties involved, decide whether face-to-face mediation or a letter of apology was suitable. (Kensington and Chelsea)

To encourage a focus on the needs of victims, YOT workers asked children and young people to choose an article about a crime from their local paper and bring it in to discuss with their case manager. This resulted in focused discussion on the victim issues which was relevant to the child or young person and the community where they lived. (North East Lincolnshire)

This project, Restorative Justice in Schools, originally funded by the Youth Justice Board, was now funded by the Welsh Assembly Government via the Community Safety Partnership in order to continue and expand to secondary schools across the authority. This innovative project gave schools an excellent support in behaviour management, in encouraging pupils to accept responsibility for their actions and the harm or damage they had caused. Schools appreciated the valuable support they received from the YOS workers to help them manage children and young peoples' disputes and behaviour. YOS workers took one-to-one and group sessions with children and young people and helped them resolve issues and learn to get on better with others. YOS workers also made effective contributions to the school's Personal Health Social Education programmes. There was a comprehensive referral form for youth offending, and YOS workers took care to evaluate all aspects of the work. (Rhondda Cynon Taf)

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES

YOT inspections in Wales were undertaken in cooperation with Social Services Inspectorate Wales, HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales and the Healthcare Commission. The health elements will be carried out by Health Inspectorate Wales from autumn 2007, but at the time of this report were inspected by the Healthcare Commission on behalf of Health Inspectorate Wales.

As part of Phase 3 of the inspection programme, three YOT inspections were carried out in Wales in 2006/2007 in Powys, Ceredigion and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The first two were mid Wales authorities, whilst the third was located in more heavily populated valleys of South East Wales. The context of YOT work varied between the three. Powys and Ceredigion had previously been one YOT which divided into two in April 2005.

	Powys	Ceredigion	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Average for Wales
Population – Census 2001	126,354	74,941	232,000	
% 10 to 17 year olds	22%	19%	11%	23%
3 years+ able to speak, read or write Welsh	16%	43%	17%	24%
% white population	99%	99%	99%	98%

MANAGEMENT

- The YOT manager (and staff in some cases) were well represented on relevant partnerships
- Protocols and service level agreements were not finalised or reviewed on a regular basis
- In all three YOTs there was a shortage of an education representative on the YOT Management Board. This was confirmed in operational provision with a lack of overall contribution from education and work-based learning and career advice opportunities. In two YOTs, the lack of a health representation was also a problem
- Funding provision was lacking in two areas.

WORK IN COURTS

- All three YOTs had sound relationships with the local court, with experienced and knowledgeable staff present to assist
- Communication about possible remands into custody from the court to the YOT was good in one, but poor in the others
- Two of the three had pre-sentence reports that were based on Asset, but none of them sufficiently addressed Risk of Harm or undertook an offence analysis
- Funding provision was lacking in two areas.

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

- All three worked well in partnership, and were involved in prevention work, but one was on an ad hoc rather than a planned basis
- Two YOTs undertook good work with children and young people who had offended, although initial supervision plans varied greatly, as did frequency of appointments. All three encouraged the completion of *What do YOU think?*
- All three had problems with vacant or insufficiently resourced health posts which hindered the service subsequently provided. For example, in one YOT there was no Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services worker, which resulted in a lack of access to CAMHS services. In another, there was no nurse so physical health needs were not addressed
- Safeguarding was undertaken well in two YOTs but poorly in the other
- For two YOTs, education provision was poor, but in the third 86% of school age children and young people were in provision
- All three undertook consultation with service users, with utilisation of the information to varying degrees
- Parents/carers received a very good service with both one-to-one and group work help in two YOTs, whilst in the third the lack of a parenting coordinator hampered progress
- Work on diversity issues including provision for use of the Welsh language, varied considerably between the three YOTs.

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DETENTION AND TRAINING ORDERS

- All three YOTs maintained good contact during the custodial element of a detention and training order, including attendance at training plan meetings, and encouraged and enabled parents to do likewise. One YOT made a point of having regular, frequent contact through visits, including to children and young people from Wales in English institutions
- Following transfer into the community, there were difficulties in one area due to the lack of suitable accommodation. In others, with little joined-up provision of specialist services such as education, health and parenting, the transition was not good.

WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- The work with victims was undertaken in a largely satisfactory way in all three YOTs. In one, volunteers and staff were provided with good training, in another there was a wide range of reparation projects, and in the third positive relationships with victim support were apparent.

OVERALL

The quality of work across these three Welsh YOTs varied considerably, but some issues were of importance to all, such as the shortage of strategic education representatives on the YOT Management Board and lack of operational health posts, the provision of Welsh language speakers, and Welsh children and young people being held in English institutions.

THEMATIC REPORTS

The YOT inspection programme completed two thematic reviews during 2006/2007: on the healthcare needs of children and young people as identified by previous inspections and on the role of Attendance Centres

AN INSPECTION OF JUNIOR ATTENDANCE CENTRES

As outlined in last year's report, HM Inspectorate of Probation was asked by the Home Office's Youth Justice and Children Unit to undertake a short thematic inspection to identify the extent to which Attendance Centres had become integrated into the wider youth justice system and to identify factors which have helped or hindered that process. The report was produced and placed on HMI Probation's website in January 2007.

Key findings were:

STRENGTHS

- All centres visited and the majority of respondents to the questionnaires (including YOT managers) had:
 - made some progress in integration during recent years
 - developed a range of relevant programmes
 - reached agreements with local YOTs to accommodate children and young people on other order types.
- The majority of officers in charge:
 - demonstrated great commitment to their work and to the children and young people attending their centre, as did their instructors
 - worked more than the hours for which they were paid in order to ensure the smooth running of the Attendance Centre
 - ran their centre in accordance with the national standard
 - found the Attendance Centre inspection regime and recent developments in the Youth Justice and Children Unit helpful.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- There was inconsistency of access, programme content, style of delivery, criteria for accepting other order types, and the level of engagement with YOTs
- The employment status of instructors was unclear
- YOT managers were concerned about taking on responsibility for the centres and their staff whilst employment issues and funding details were not clarified.

RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDED:

THE YOUTH JUSTICE AND CHILDREN UNIT SHOULD:

- i. agree with the Youth Justice Board and issue guidance covering the basis on which young people under YOT supervision could be managed at Attendance Centres
- ii. work with the Youth Justice Board to commission the development of a core set of programmes suitable to be delivered by Attendance Centres and which complement those delivered by YOTs
- iii. in partnership with the Youth Justice Board, develop a core training package for officers in charge and instructors covering basic child protection procedures, programme delivery, diversity and health and safety
- iv. in consultation with the Youth Justice Board, develop and implement a consistent national recruitment process
- v. issue clarification of the rules about payment to officers in charge when engaged in the enforcement of orders
- vi. determine a clear basis for funding any transfer of authority from the Home Office to the local authorities which could be published quickly in the event of the legislation going forward
- vii. clarify the employment status of instructors and the implications of any employment transfer.

OFFICERS IN CHARGE SHOULD:

- i. engage with courts and YOT managers to ensure robust systems of notification about new Attendance Centre orders
- ii. seek regular invitations to relevant YOT meetings and training events for themselves and their instructors
- iii. maintain regular contact with the case manager of any attendee being supervised by the YOT so that they are fully aware of any developments or matters of concern
- iv. report back to Youth Justice and Children Unit on the implementation of any inspection recommendations within three months of receiving the report.

YOT MANAGERS SHOULD:

- i. ensure that their staff are aware of the work of the Attendance Centre and the potential benefits it offers for young people
- ii. seek the involvement of officers in charge in relevant meetings and training events
- iii. ensure that when a young person under the supervision of the YOT is sent to the Attendance Centre, any information about Risk of Harm to others or vulnerability is fully shared with the officer in charge.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT – A REVIEW OF HEALTHCARE IN THE COMMUNITY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFFEND

This joint review by the Healthcare Commission and HM Inspectorate of Probation looked at the role and input made by healthcare organisations in YOTs. The review covered inspections of 50 YOTs in England and Wales between September 2003 and April 2006. It was prompted by an analysis of the recommendations from all the reports on the inspections of YOTs, which found that, except for the police, healthcare organisations were given more recommendations than any other partner. The review was aimed at helping YOTs in supporting children and young people with mental health, physical health or substance misuse needs. It was also aimed at informing the debate on how healthcare and other agencies could best work together to reduce offending by children and young people, and its subsequent impact on society. The report of the review was published in November 2006.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Since the inspection programme began in September 2003, there had been an increase in the availability of healthcare services for children and young people who offend. Despite this, there was a significant amount of work that needed to be done by healthcare organisations to meet all the needs of this group. In particular, services need to be made more accessible for 16 and 17 year olds, as people in this age group are responsible for the majority of crimes committed by children and young people and they are also responsible for the more serious crimes. The review found that in most YOTs, much effort had been made to recruit substance misuse workers, resulting in 90% of YOTs having good access to both a worker and further substance misuse services. In contrast, English National Health Service trusts had shown less diligence in fulfilling their statutory duty to provide healthcare workers to YOTs. However, among the healthcare staff appointed there had been an increase in the number of healthcare workers who specialise in mental health needs. One in six YOTs still had no healthcare worker, and a third of them had no mental health worker.

The Government's intended role for healthcare workers in YOTs was that they would ensure that children and young people who offend had access to healthcare services. However, the review found that a majority of healthcare workers in YOTs spend most of their time providing healthcare services to children and young people themselves. Although the review saw this as a positive and practical response to the difficulties in ensuring that children and young people who offend had access to healthcare services, it had also resulted, at times, in the healthcare worker providing services that reflected their experience and specialities rather than the needs of the child or young person. It also meant that a child or young person who offends needed to be involved with the YOT youth offending team on an ongoing basis in order to receive treatment.

The review found that YOTs' access to, and support from their local child and adolescent mental health services had improved over the last three years. However, between one-sixth and a quarter of YOTs were still experiencing problems in gaining access to these services. A lack of engagement by the healthcare representatives on the Management Boards of YOTs, had meant that the YOT had no-one to ensure that access to these services was provided. In contrast, the support and access offered by substance misuse services had generally been adequate.

For YOTs to work effectively, there needed to be effective joint working across specialities. However, in 15% of YOTs, significant problems were reported in joint working between specialist health and substance misuse workers and case managers. These problems were exacerbated by the lack of adequate procedures for the sharing of information that affected many YOTs.

The review found that for one in six YOTs, a healthcare representative had not been provided to the YOT's Management Board by the National Health Service in the local authority area, as required. It was of concern that, where a representative did exist, too often they were not sufficiently engaged in the work of the YOT to make a positive contribution to it and to children and young people who offend. This resulted in 60% of YOTs not having adequate involvement by a healthcare professional at a strategic level. One of the results of this was that in 80% of YOTs, there was no overall monitoring of either the health needs of the children and young people or the impact of services on those needs. Due to the lack of healthcare representatives on their Management Boards, YOTs were unable to establish whether the services that the National Health Service was providing to them were appropriate, whether they were effective in meeting the needs of this population, and whether, consequently, they were helping to contribute to reductions in offending behaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Healthcare Commission and HM Inspectorate of Probation made the following recommendations.:

Primary Care Trusts working with YOTs should ensure that:

- they fulfil their statutory duty to provide at least one healthcare worker to their local YOT
- in light of the Government's planned restructuring of Primary Care Trusts in England, neither their representation on the Management Boards of YOTs, nor their provision of healthcare workers to and funding of YOTs, is compromised.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SHOULD ENSURE THAT:

- they implement the Government's guidelines to deliver mental health services to children up to the age of 18.

PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS, LOCAL HEALTH BOARDS AND CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SHOULD ENSURE THAT:

- an appropriate representative from both Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the relevant Primary Care Trusts, or local Health Boards, attend meetings of the Management Board on a regular basis and make a positive contribution to the strategic planning of healthcare services for children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending.

HEALTHCARE REPRESENTATIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT BOARDS OF YOTS SHOULD ENSURE THAT:

- they take responsibility for the provision of local healthcare services, which are flexible and which meet the health needs of children and young people who offend
- they provide appropriately qualified healthcare workers to YOTs who have the appropriate specialist skills which meet the needs of children and young people who offend
- protocols and service level agreements between the YOT and healthcare organisations are written or updated as appropriate, to cover the specifications of service and roles of healthcare workers, including terms of secondment, arrangements for cover and access to mainstream services
- they take a robust approach to ensuring that healthcare services are available for and accessible to children and young people who offend, especially mental health services for 16-18 year olds
- an agreed, rigorous and workable policy on the sharing of information and keeping records is implemented in the YOT
- health needs and the impact of healthcare services on those needs are monitored more robustly and comprehensively.

THE DRUG ACTION TEAM AND/OR LOCAL YOUNG PERSON'S SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE SHOULD ENSURE THAT:

- they have representation on the Management Board of the YOT
- specific policies on the sharing of information are developed for substance misuse workers in YOTs that address the concerns of the children and young people, the staff in substance misuse services, and the needs of the YOT and the public.

MANAGERS OF YOTS, THEIR HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND THEIR SUBSTANCE MISUSE WORKERS SHOULD ENSURE THAT:

- the assessment and referral processes for health and substance misuse issues are sufficiently robust and efficient.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD SHOULD ENSURE THAT:

- following appropriate research, more specific guidance is provided on the role of the healthcare worker in YOTs to ensure that the best use of limited resources is made.

IN ENGLAND, THE HEALTHCARE COMMISSION SHOULD ENSURE THAT:

- its annual assessment of National Health Service trusts checks that healthcare organisations comply with their statutory duties in relation to YOTs
- findings from the inspections of YOTs are fed into their annual assessment of National Health Service trusts for 2006/2007
- they identify existing measures of health service contributions to youth justice services that can be incorporated into the screening process that accompanies their annual assessment of National Health Service trusts.

In Wales, the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales should undertake similar checks.

THE VIEWS OF SERVICE USERS

In last year's report we outlined that one of the key principles in the Framework for Inspection of Children's Services was the importance of listening to children and young people and using their views when planning and amending services. As part of the YOT inspection, we expect to see children and young people involved in consultations about the services they receive, in particular that this process enables all of them to participate, for example those with specific communication needs.

Onset and Asset can be used to elicit views through *Over to you* and *What do YOU think?* questionnaires. Several YOTs have undertaken specific surveys of children and young people, sometimes independently, at times as part of a broader local authority wide process. It is important that this feedback is used to improve service provision and that children and young people are informed about what action is taken, or if not acted upon, why that is the case. Our experience this year is that, whilst more YOTs are undertaking consultation, this is not always collated and used to improve services, nor are the findings communicated back to the children and young people.

We have seen a number of very good examples of consultation resulting in changes to practice. One of these was the reshaping of a waiting area to reduce damage and help children and young people feel safe. A second was a survey that produced information about the significant number of children and young people who were witnessing violence in the home. The YOT changed their practice to increase the number of home visits and undertake regular discussions about the issue.

CONTACT WITH SERVICE USERS DURING THE INSPECTION

We view consultation with service users as a very important element of our inspection. Most are offered the option of either a face-to-face interview or completing a questionnaire. We will also speak to victims by telephone, or in certain circumstances visit them in their home. We hope that YOTs will find the information below useful. We see participation as an important way of increasing inclusion and promoting good citizenship.

For children and young people we also use an interactive software package to ask them the same questions as those in the interview. This is usually installed in the YOT in the weeks leading up to the inspection. Some of the results of that questionnaire are outlined below:

Respondents were mainly male (82%), with the majority being White British (77%), although a number were from Black or Black British Caribbean (4%) or mixed heritage (7%).

When asked if they had completed a *What do YOU think?* form, 55% of children and young people said yes, but a worrying 26% said they did not know what it was. Nearly a fifth said they had not completed one.

In response to the question: 'What do you have to do?'

Response	%
Stay out of trouble	46%
Look at things that get me into trouble	23%
Look at things that cause me problems	19%
Make amends to the victims	10%
None of these	2%

When asked did they know why they had to do these things, 71% 'definitely' knew, whilst 21% 'just about' knew. Two thirds knew it was about keeping out of trouble, 8% thought it was about punishment and 26% felt it was both.

Just over a third of children and young people talked to their parents/carers about what they did at the YOT, whilst 34% talked to their friends and 14% to other family members.

Other questions asked about their relationships with the YOT workers. In response to 'Are people at the YOT helpful to you?', 94% said either 'yes always' or 'sometimes'. Almost all felt that the worker talked to them in a way they could understand, either always or some of the time. 96% felt listened to, and 93% thought they were understood. The great majority thought they were treated fairly and with respect. Nearly two-thirds knew how to make a complaint. Over two-thirds recorded that going to the YOT had changed their life for the better.

Response to: Has the YOT helped you with any of these things?

Response	%
What I think about myself	13%
What I think about offending	23%
How I get on with people	9%
What I do with my spare time	13%
My school	11%
My work	9%
My family	13%
My health	3%
None of these	4%

A significant percentage (88%) thought they had stopped getting into trouble or offending, either most of the time or definitely.

One aspect of the questionnaire explored whether the YOT worker was reliable. Did they turn up on time and do what they said they would do? The respondents replied that only 64% turned up on time always, 27% sometimes. In a quarter of cases they sometimes carried things out, but in 71% they always did what they said they would. These figures have implications for staff in the YOT modelling the behaviour they would like to see in those they supervised.

Almost all children and young people knew what would happen if they did not come in for appointments.

Comments from the children and young people about what happened in the YOT included:

"I get to talk to someone about my problems."

"Gets me off the streets, gets me out of work, helps me think before I go and do something, helped me think about what will happen if I get locked up again."

"It helps you think what you've done it helps you think about your drug taking – it helps you stay on the right track or does its best to help you."

"... And it gives me the opportunity to talk to people about things I can't talk to my family about and since I have been coming here I haven't been in trouble with the police."

"Nothing."

"Nothing really."

"I think that the people at the YOT helped me because they realised that what I did was bad but I'm not a bad person, the people at the YOT seen who I really am."

"Nothing much really."

"My YOT worker gets me to do some work."

"Talking about different things with my YOT worker."

FEEDBACK FROM YOTS

OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND CODE OF PRACTICE

HM Inspectorate of Probation's Code of Practice which, along with our Complaints Procedure, is on our website, identifies certain principles which inform our inspection processes. These place emphasis on our status as an independent inspectorate and highlight the importance of consultation, a firm evidence base, the promotion of diversity and timely feedback as key elements of any inspection.

We have sought to conduct the YOT inspections in accordance with these principles and to conduct ourselves in a professional, impartial and courteous manner. We received one complaint under our procedures in 2006/2007, and a number of comments about processes. These comments were constructive and as such we have sought to learn from them and used them to inform our Phase 4 processes.

FEEDBACK FROM STAFF INTERVIEWED

YOT staff interviewed during the course of each YOT inspection were invited to complete a feedback form which is forwarded, in the first instance anonymously, to the Assistant Chief Inspector for their consideration. Any comments relating to individual inspection staff are also copied to them and shared with their line manager. The data from the forms are collated and considered by the lead inspector.

We received 599 completed forms from the 31 YOTs inspected during the 2006/2007 Phase 3. The aggregate responses are shown below:

Response	Yes, reasonably	No
Were you given sufficient notice of the inspection?	100%	0%
Were you clear about the purpose of the inspection?	99%	1%
Did you consider the demands placed on yourself and/or your staff were reasonable?	95%	5%
Were the discussions with you undertaken in a professional, impartial and courteous manner?	99%	1%
In your opinion, did the inspection pay sufficient attention to race equality and wider diversity issues?	95%	5%
If you received individual feedback from HM Inspectorate of Probation staff about your work, was this helpful?	96%	4%

NEXT STEPS

In our final year of the current programme, we have embarked on Phase 4, which adapts our previous programme in response to changes in the context and to our own learning.

We continue to contribute to the Joint Area Reviews of children's services, although their basis has changed to focus on children who are looked after; those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and safeguarding coupled with other, individually determined, investigations. We have worked hard to maximise our contribution to the Joint Area Review and anecdotally, we perceive that this link has raised the profile of YOTs within the local authority and in particular with some Chief Executives.

The forthcoming year will be one of finishing current work and planning the future, both in Wales and in England as developments for more joint co-ordination of inspections are brought into play. Our view is that whilst the next YOT inspection programme may well be different from the current arrangements, it should be a rolling programme. It encompasses the issues of vulnerable children and young people along with protecting the public. Recent experience suggests that it can be notoriously difficult to rely on self-generated data as a basis for assessing whether an inspection should take place or not. Contrasting inspection results against current data submission, coupled with views that the inspection was an aid to help the YOT 'take stock', suggests that independent assessment of quality provides an essential benefit.

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