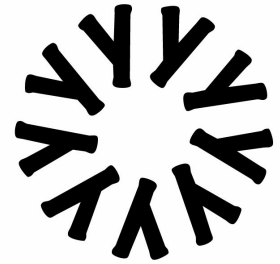


*Audit Commission  
Commission for Social Care Inspection  
Estyn  
Healthcare Commission  
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HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
HM Inspectorate of Probation  
Office for Standards in Education  
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# Joint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

Report on:  
Conwy-Denbighshire  
Youth Offending Team

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## Foreword

This inspection programme will cover all Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales over a five to six year period. In this, its first phase, emphasis will be placed on establishing benchmarks and the dissemination of good practice. Subsequent phases will focus on the examination of data gained from inspections that are individually tailored to each Youth Offending Team and the achievement against targets set by the Youth Justice Board, improving performance and ensuring consistency across the 155 Youth Offending Teams.

This is the first inspection report to be published on a Youth Offending Team in Wales and as such has particular significance. The Conwy-Denbighshire Youth Offending Team works to two local authority areas, each with different approaches and expectations. Although there had been a number of transitional changes, we found that the Youth Offending Team and its partners provided a range of services and resources to local children and young people, parents/carers and victims on a voluntary and statutory basis.

We identified a number of examples of good practice which included:

- ◆ work with children and young people at risk of offending
- ◆ effective interventions with children and young people who have offended in accordance with national standards
- ◆ the quality of work with children and young people serving detention and training orders
- ◆ the engagement with and support offered to parents/carers.

All these elements contributed to a positive engagement with local agendas and the high regard with which the Youth Offending Team is held within the area.

We also found some areas for improvement. Although some relate to practice within the Youth Offending Team, the most significant are located in the management and partnership arrangements which required attention in order to ensure that the Youth Offending Team was able to continue along the positive path that it has already started. The areas for improvement included the need for greater strategic direction from the Steering Group and the appropriate representation of statutory partners. We also identified inconsistencies in the delivery of final warnings which should be addressed, as should the service offered to the victims of crimes committed by children and young people.

The report contains recommendations addressed to individual partners and the Youth Offending Team Strategic Manager, which should contribute to improvements in performance and thus continue to positively promote the Youth Offending Team in the community.

*Andrew Bridges*  
*HM Chief Inspector of Probation*

## Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	3
Glossary	4
Introduction	5
Key findings	6
Overview	9
1. MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS	11
2. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING	19
3. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFFEND	23
4. WORK WITH PARENTS/CARERS	30
5. WORK WITH VICTIMS	34
The joint inspection of YOTs	37
Inspection arrangements	39
Scoring approach	41
Next steps	42

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We would particularly like to thank Nia Elis-Williams Youth Offending Team Strategic Manager, Sioned Edwards Administrative Officer, Paul Gregson Senior Practitioner, Lesley Kew Operational Manager and Mike Denman Chair of the Steering Group for their commitment to the inspection.

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## Glossary

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASSET	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPN	Community Psychiatric Nurse
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
DTO	Detention Training Order
EOTASS	Education Other Than At School Services
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
LEA	Local Education Authority
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
NCH Cymru	National Children's Home Wales
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OCN	Open College Network
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PSR	Pre-Sentence Report
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Emotional/mental health screening tool
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOI	Young Offenders Institution
YOT	Youth Offending Team
YPSMS	Young Peoples Substance Misuse Service

## Introduction

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

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

Emphasis has been placed on two core areas:

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

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

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

## **Key findings**

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

- ◇ Although the Steering Group met regularly, not all statutory partners were represented at a strategic level and thus did not provide the required vision and direction.
- ◇ The Local Health Boards of Conwy and Denbighshire did not contribute to the strategic management of the YOT.
- ◇ There was no common approach between the two local authorities for the education of the children and young people with whom the YOT was working.
- ◇ The YOT engaged well with local agendas and partner agencies spoke highly of its work and of the YOT Strategic Manager.
- ◇ Further attention needed to be given to the supervision and appraisal of staff as well as their training, in particular in relation to child protection, diversity, risk assessment and risk management.

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

- ◇ There was a mechanism for identifying children and young people at risk of offending, who were then assessed using ASSET.
- ◇ Children and young people were offered a wide range of prevention services.
- ◇ The YOT had, as yet, no way of measuring the impact of this work.

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

- ◇ Assessments were completed on children and young people who offended, in accordance with national standards.
- ◇ Work with children and young people serving DTOs was commendable.
- ◇ Orders were properly enforced.
- ◇ Final warnings were not being delivered in accordance with the relevant Home Office/YJB guidance.
- ◇ The range of interventions available did not fully address the diverse needs of the community.
- ◇ Further attention needed to be given to offence focused work.

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

- ◇ Parents/carers were sensitively engaged in a range of interventions, based on YJB effective practice guidelines.
- ◇ They expressed satisfaction with the way in which they were involved in their children's supervision.

### **Work with victims**

- ◆ Arrangements had been made to take forward work with victims, however, the contact and referral processes were not functioning properly.
- ◆ Victims' involvement in the referral order panel meetings was low.
- ◆ Well-organised victim surveys should be conducted regularly.

### **Overall assessment**

Although the work with victims needed further development, we noted considerable strengths in the work undertaken with children and young people at risk of offending, those who had offended and their parents/carers. The YOT was described as a well-functioning team and it was apparent that its partners held the YOT Strategic Manager in high regard.

The YOT had undergone a number of significant changes at the strategic management level and this had affected its performance. However, it is to the credit of the current Strategic Manager and staff that the good practices noted had been developed and maintained.

We were greatly concerned by the operation of the Steering Group which, we felt failed to provide the requisite direction and guidance. The overall performance of the Conwy-Denbighshire YOT was consequently assessed as **unsatisfactory requiring improvement**.

## Recommendations

*The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that:*

- ◆ an action plan is devised to address the following recommendations and forwarded to the lead inspector within three months of the publication of this report
- ◆ the Steering Group is composed of representatives from all statutory partner agencies and provides the requisite strategic direction to the YOT.

*The YOT Strategic Manager should ensure that:*

- ◆ staff are supervised and appraised in accordance with local guidance
- ◆ a strategy is developed to address the training needs of staff
- ◆ interventions, both on an individual basis and through group work, are developed to address offending behaviour
- ◆ the arrangements for the delivery of referral orders are reviewed and the Home Office/YJB guidance implemented
- ◆ work with victims is in line with the YJB effective practice guidelines.

*The Education Authorities for Conwy and Denbighshire should ensure that:*

- ◆ there exists a consistency in provision and approach to the education of children and young people referred by the YOT.

*The Local Health Boards for Conwy and Denbighshire should ensure that:*

- ◆ arrangements are in place for the timely assessment of the health needs of children and young people referred to the YOT and that their assessed needs are met.

*The North Wales Police should ensure that:*

- ◆ its final warning policy and delivery is in line with the Home Office/YJB guidance.

## Overview

- ◆ Conwy and Denbighshire are two large counties on the north coast of Wales. They have a combined total population of 202,661 (Census 2001). Conwy is the larger of the two areas and has the slightly greater share of the population with 109,596. In Conwy 24.1% of the population are aged between 0-19 and in Denbighshire 22.7%. Both these figures are close to the average for England and Wales, which stands at 25.1%.
- ◆ Each area has a predominantly white population, 98.9% in Conwy and 98.8% in Denbighshire. These figures are very close to the average in Wales at 97.9%. The percentages for all minority ethnic groups are each below 1%, on par with the average for all of Wales.
- ◆ In Denbighshire 36.0% of the population have one or more skills in the Welsh language. In Conwy the figure is even higher at 39.7%. Both of these figures exceed the average for Wales at 28.4%.
- ◆ Unemployment levels in both counties are at 3.7%. This is similar to the average for England and Wales of 3.4%. The employment levels are lower than the average for England and Wales because in both areas the percentages of retired residents are greater than the national average of 13.6%, with 18.8% of the population being retired in Conwy and 16.2% in Denbighshire.
- ◆ The YOT is based in Colwyn Bay, which is located in the centre of the north coastline stretching across each county. According to the YOT, approximately 70% of the team's workload comes from this small region of Conwy and Denbighshire. To enable the YOT to cover the whole of the region staff regularly make use of community resources such as libraries and community centres in rural districts.
- ◆ The YJB figures for youth offending between April 2002 and March 2003 (shown below) indicate that youth offending in Conwy and Denbighshire is much lower than the average per YOT for England and Wales. However the figure for public order offences were nearly the same as the national average and the figure for non-domestic burglary in Conwy and Denbighshire was higher than the national average.

	<b>No. offences Conwy and Denbighshire</b>	<b>Average per YOT for England and Wales</b>
Violence against person	116	222
Racially aggravated offences	4	9
Sexual offences	1	11
Death or injury by reckless driving	0	0.8
Motoring offences	161	394
Robbery	0	30
Domestic burglary	25	50
Non-domestic burglary	47	36
Vehicle theft	69	97
Theft and handling	163	305
Fraud and forgery	7	19
Arson	7	9
Criminal damage	132	175
Drugs offences	48	85
Public order	111	113
Other	34	61
Breach of conditional discharge	1	9
Breach of statutory order	17	52
Breach of bail	12	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>1708.8</b>

# 1. MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

## 1.1 Leadership

### *Inspection criteria*

#### *The Management Board:*

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

The Conwy CEO had lead responsibility for the YOT, but a principal policy officer from the Denbighshire CEO's office chaired the Steering Group. It comprised strategic and operational managers from the two local authorities, chief officers from the police and local probation area, representatives at both strategic and operational manager level from some of the key voluntary organisations, such as Victim Support, NCH Cymru, and a councillor from Conwy. There was no representative from the local health boards, although we were told that there had been one prior to the reorganisation of the health service locally. Even though the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health for Conwy had recently joined the Steering Group, the majority of its members were operational managers.

There was no formal liaison arrangement between the Steering Group chair, who was a lower grade than the YOT Strategic Manager, and the Conwy CEO. As a result, the CEO relied on the YOT Strategic Manager for information on its progress. The chair also met regularly with the YOT Strategic Manager and took the opportunity to scrutinise the data returns before they were sent to the YJB. It appeared, however, that due to the timing of meetings, these data returns were often submitted retrospectively to the remainder of the Steering Group. Most members were satisfied that the YOT was performing well and that the information was sent to the YJB in a timely manner. Some did, however, express the view that the data were occasionally confusing and could lead to misinterpretation. There did not appear to be any formal structure for reviewing the implementation of the Youth Justice Plan or monitoring user feedback.

Although links with the YJB had been established, Steering Group members expressed the view that they needed more direct dialogue as a number of questions raised had not been answered. The lack of awareness of the

Welsh agenda, accessing secure facilities near to the child's or young person's home area, rurality and the absence of 'model' staffing protocols and guidance on indemnity were all cited as areas which the YJB could, and should, have addressed. These issues have been raised with YJB.

The make-up of the Steering Group influenced its ability to make financial and/or strategic decisions which were often deferred for further consultation within the individual funding agencies. Although supportive, Steering Group members acknowledged that they had not provided sufficient oversight or direction to the YOT, but had mainly concentrated on operational matters, looking to the YOT Manager for strategic direction. Some were uncertain about whether the YJB or the local CEOs held overall responsibility for the YOT. Others were not clear about its role and the reciprocal benefits of joint targets and priorities, even though they shared other platforms, such as the Community Safety Steering Group with the YOT Strategic Manager.

There was, however, evidence of change. The Conwy CEO had latterly recognised that the YOT needed strategic direction and had written to the Denbighshire CEO regarding the formation of a senior management group, which was to be chaired by the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health for Conwy. We were assured by the CEO that this group would be operational by the end of the financial year.

***Strength:***

- ◆ The Steering Group met regularly and provided a level of support for the YOT Strategic Manager.

***Areas for improvement:***

- ◆ The Steering Group did not give the required vision and direction to the YOT.
- ◆ The local health boards were not represented on the Steering Group.
- ◆ The Steering Group was not made up of representatives from the appropriate levels in the partner organisations.
- ◆ The Steering Group was not able to ensure accurate and timely data returns to the YJB or that their relevance to the work of partner agencies was understood.

## 1.2

### Partnership and resources

#### *Inspection criteria*

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

The YOT and its partners provided a wide range of services and resources to the children and young people of Conwy and Denbighshire. These services were offered on both a voluntary and statutory basis to those who were subject to a final warning, an order of the court or were considered at risk of offending.

All statutory partners had provided the YOT with staff, but it currently carried one social worker vacancy for Denbighshire Social Services who were experiencing the type of skills deficit that Social Services Departments and YOTs faced in other areas of Wales and England. There had been significant changes in the YOT staffing arrangements during the preceding year, including three of the team's seven social workers, its probation officer, health worker and a clerical officer. Although the current YOT Strategic Manager had been in post two years, the longest period of stability of anyone in this role, the operational manager and senior practitioner posts were filled by staff acting up to cover maternity leave. Only one partner provided the YOT with any salary saved during gaps in filling posts in order that sessional cover could be arranged.

Some staff were seconded, but the social workers were employed within the YOT. Social workers were circulated with details of relevant training programmes and there was a structured career progression system up to post qualification level. Police officers seconded to the YOT did not have access to a threshold payment. This is an additional payment made to operational front line police officers and a decision had been made at area level that officers seconded to the YOT would not be eligible for this. There was no return strategy or career planning and support for YOT workers nearing the end of their secondment nor any formal agreement for seconded staff to link back into their parent organisations. As a result, the parent agencies denied themselves the opportunity of enhancing their understanding of the work of the YOT.

Although the YOT had developed protocols with most of its partner agencies some required attention to address the needs of their seconded staff, the provisions of services and resources to the YOT, funding, representation and linkages between targets and priorities. A number of

protocols with partner agencies, both statutory and voluntary, were still in the development stage, some were said to have been completed but remained unsigned. One voluntary agency viewed this state of affairs positively, describing the protocol as a working document that was still evolving. However, the knock on effect was that staff and managers in the YOT appeared unsure of their roles. This situation needed to be addressed. It was particularly important that protocols established by the YOT with both statutory and voluntary agencies clarified their respective duties and responsibilities with regard to child protection, risk management and health and safety.

The YOT supplemented its core funding through grants from a variety of funding streams which required them to form some complex partnerships with voluntary agencies. Although such partnerships can provide enrichment to the YOT, heavy reliance on this type of funding can make it difficult for strategic planning, continuity of services and quality control. We were also concerned that the YOT seemed to respond to offers of help without a great deal of coordination and strategic planning. There was no consideration of exit strategies to continue after the funding ran out and little evidence of record keeping, monitoring and evaluation.

There were, however, a number of significant gaps in resources, in particular in relation to health. The CPN seconded to the team worked half-time and although highly committed, had a backlog of cases. During the inspection, we were advised that discussions were underway to try to secure a full-time health post within the YOT.

The YOT worked with two LEAs with differing expectations and ways of working. Although there was a draft protocol in place, it did not define their respective responsibilities and/or provide a common approach to the education of the children and young people with whom the YOT was working. This resulted in an inconsistent service across the YOT. As with other partners, the YOT needed to define not only its core requirements for the educational support for children and young people from each LEA more specifically, but also be clear about what it would provide itself. Both partners needed to consider their approach against the responsibilities defined under the National Assembly for Wales' requirements for extending entitlement and the YJB targets and effective practice guidelines. Additionally, there appeared to be too few opportunities for the education worker in the YOT, who was jointly funded by both authorities, to meet with the LEAs' managers and discuss educational provision.

Some of the services offered by the YOT appeared subject to particular pressures. The coordinator for referral orders, for example, was expected to cover all aspects of this demanding and important service to victims and also carried a full caseload. This left little or no time for the supervision and training of panel members and the quality control of panel meetings, which some victims and partners had described as heavily biased towards the child or young person who had offended.

Conwy County Borough Council had an equalities policy and Denbighshire had an equal opportunities policy document. The YOT did not have its own policy or practice guidance for race, diversity or the implementation of a Welsh Language Scheme and was not specifically mentioned in either of these documents. We found no evidence that it had been consulted upon,

or contributed to the Race Equality Schemes or action plans of either of the two local authorities.

Partner agencies and court representatives interviewed spoke highly of the YOT, which they believed, had taken great strides following a period of instability during its early formation. The courts were satisfied with the quality of court reports, court duty services, resumed bail information and the proactive way in which any concern was dealt with. They saw the joint service level agreement as a useful mechanism for maintaining effective relationships.

### Good practice

The YOT held annual open days to update partner agencies, sentencers and local members of the council on its work. These were cited by the local courts as a good means of raising awareness and sharing information.

### **Strengths:**

- ◆ The YOT engaged well with local agendas and partner agencies spoke highly of its work and of the YOT Strategic Manager.
- ◆ All statutory partners made some staffing and pooled budget contribution to the YOT.
- ◆ The courts were satisfied with the quality of service that they had received from the YOT.
- ◆ Good working relations existed between the police and the YOT Strategic Manager who had recently been invited to join the Police Management Tasking Group to allocate resources, review crime trends and targets.
- ◆ Staff and volunteers had had criminal record checks.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- ◆ No review had been undertaken of the funding and staffing arrangements of the YOT.
- ◆ The YOT did not have any policy or practice guidance for race, diversity or the implementation of a Welsh Language Scheme.
- ◆ The staffing provision from the health service did not meet the current demands.
- ◆ Partnership arrangements did not address the respective agency's roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection, risk assessment and management and recording of work, or give clear guidance on the appropriate use of resources.

### Good practice

The YOT Strategic Manager represented the North Wales YOT Managers Group on the Local Criminal Justice Board and chaired the Youth Justice Forum of this Board.

### 1.3

### Staff supervision, development and training

#### *Inspection criteria*

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

The YOT had developed well-defined staff supervision and appraisal guidance that linked appraisal objectives to the team's objectives as detailed in the Youth Justice Plan. It operated an induction process of one week's duration for all new staff, backed up by a comprehensive induction pack. New members of the team with no previous YOT experience were given protected caseloads and encouraged to use peer group support during the early stages of their employment. Although the induction pack also mentioned a lone-working policy, staff were not aware of its existence and there was no consistent guidance or practice that specifically addressed the health and safety of staff working in the YOT. The more experienced staff relied on practice inherited through their seconding agencies.

The YOT Strategic Manager did not receive supervision from her line manager. Instead they had 'quarterly meetings' and as a member of the senior management team the YOT Strategic Manager attended meetings of this group as appropriate. The YOT Strategic Manager had not been appraised during the two years in post.

Despite the structured guidance, we found that staff supervision within the YOT was inconsistent in regularity and quality and often took the form of case discussions. There appeared to be little focus on staff development and recording of these supervision sessions was sometimes patchy. There was, however, evidence that individual development and changes in responsibility were recognised. In accordance with the career progression system, at least two members of the team had their posts regraded to higher salary levels. Appraisals had been prepared on a limited number of staff. This may have, however, been exacerbated by the absence of one of the operational managers during the preceding months. Supervision and appraisals needed to be addressed.

All staff, including volunteers and sessional workers, had had child protection training. The need for practice guidance, refresher training and closer management supervision in relation to child protection and risk

assessment and management was, however, recognised, as it was accepted that practice was not sufficiently robust. We were concerned about the type and quality of services that might be offered to someone from a minority ethnic background, as we found from our discussions with staff, many lacked understanding of the issues and tended to minimise the concerns. Diversity training had been planned for the team but had been postponed because of workload pressures, although some staff had attended comparable events with the police.

Four members of the YOT staff were undertaking the YJB certificate in effective practice. The YOT also had a pool of accredited practice teachers and regularly provides placements for both students studying for a Diploma in Social Work and trainee probation officers.

There were no partnership agreements between the YOT and statutory partners about staffing issues, resources, funding arrangements, complaints, discipline, capability, grievance, training, supervision and appraisals. The absence of any such arrangements had been highlighted in a complaint made some 12 months prior to the inspection which still had to be resolved and had inevitably had a negative impact on staff.

#### ***Strengths:***

- ◆ The YOT Strategic Manager and team continued to provide good quality services.
- ◆ There was a good induction programme for new staff.
- ◆ The YOT had structures and practice guidance for staff supervision and appraisal.
- ◆ Some staff supervision and appraisals took place.
- ◆ The YOT was described by many as an enthusiastic and committed team that worked well together.
- ◆ Staff had a good understanding of effective practice principles which were well developed within the YOT.

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

- ◆ The YOT Strategic Manager had no clear line manager support and supervision.
- ◆ Staff supervision within the YOT was inconsistent.
- ◆ There was no partnership agreement between the YOT and statutory partners that clearly defined roles and responsibilities with regard to complaints, discipline, grievance, capability and staff secondment arrangements.
- ◆ The YOT and all its partner agencies needed to develop staff and services in line with the YJB's guidance for YOTs entitled *Achieving Equality*, issued to YOT managers in 2001.
- ◆ The YOT needed to develop its health and safety policy and practice, paying particular attention to lone working and the transportation of children and young people.

- ◇ Child protection, risk assessment and management, and health and safety of both staff and members of the public should be integral to all protocols and agreements.

### **OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

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

## 2.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

### 2.1 Assessment of those at risk of offending

#### *Inspection criteria*

- ◇ *There is a mechanism to identify those children and young people within the area who are at risk of offending.*
- ◇ *There are arrangements to assess the needs of those individuals identified as being at risk of offending.*

The YOT had designated a member of staff to work with children and young people at risk of offending and they, in partnership with a number of other organisations, were responsible for identifying and delivering services to this group. It also contributed to local action teams under the CDRPs, including Juvenile Nuisance and Antisocial Behaviour. Where a child or young person came to the notice of the police on three occasions for antisocial behaviour, but was not arrested for a criminal offence, they were referred to the YOT for assessment and intervention. Referrals were also taken from other partner agencies including Social Services, schools and PRUs.

ASSET forms were completed on all children and young people referred to the specialist worker and the parents/carers were usually involved. Some interventions were offered as part of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract.

#### **Strengths:**

- ◇ There was an identified worker with responsibility for prevention.
- ◇ There is a mechanism for referral to the YOT.
- ◇ All children and young people referred to the specialist prevention worker were assessed using ASSET.

## 2.2 Interventions for those at risk of offending

### *Inspection criteria*

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

All the YOT resources were available to the specialist prevention worker for those children and young people assessed as in need. In addition, a targeted prevention programme had been developed which included outdoor activities, gymnasium, artwork and usually ended with 'an expedition', a challenging experience that promoted a range of skills, offered as part of the Duke of Edinburgh programme.

Work within schools was taken forward through the YOT education worker and police officers in conjunction with the YPSMS who jointly contributed substance misuse input into the citizenship curriculum in schools. They also provided drug awareness training for teachers. The police officers were available to offer mediation to resolve conflict between pupils.

In delivering services to this group of children and young people, the YOT worked jointly with voluntary agencies and others in the following initiatives:

#### Get Hooked on Fishing

An initiative that started in County Durham in April 2000 had been adopted in the Conwy-Denbighshire YOT and offered to 10-16 year olds. This scheme had also attracted referrals from schools for children and young people with behavioural problems including ADHD.

#### Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

Offered OCN qualifications.

#### YPSMS

Funded through Community Safety and based in the YOT offices. This service is available to both children and young people who had offended and those who had not. It provided a range of interventions including aromatherapy and acupuncture.

## NACRO

Offered vocational training and recreational activities to children and young people who had offended as well as those who had not.

## SPLASH

Scheme funded by the YJB catering for socially excluded children and young people in Rhyl West/South West. The scheme was based with the Denbighshire Social Inclusion Unit and the YOT offered staff and evaluation support.

## The YOT Mediation and Reparation Officer

Offered mediation to children and young people and their parents/carers.

### **Strengths:**

- ◆ The YOT offered a wide range of prevention services to children and young people. A number of partner agencies were involved in these arrangements.
- ◆ Children and young people participating in these services did not appear to feel stigmatised by involvement with the YOT interventions or by attending its offices for these services.
- ◆ Parents/carers were encouraged to participate in the Get Hooked on Fishing activity.

## 2.3

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

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

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

The YOT kept records of the number of children and young people referred to the initiatives they managed and obtained feedback from those involved. It was apparent, from our observation, that they gained real benefits from some of the programmes, in particular the Duke of Edinburgh's OCN awards.

There was, however, no means of measuring impact. Feedback from partner agencies regarding other initiatives suggested that some progress was being made in the area of prevention of offending and reoffending.

### **Strength:**

- ◆ Children and young people were being positively engaged in activities to divert them away from offending.

***Area for improvement:***

- ◇ No system had been developed to monitor or evaluate the impact of this work.

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

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

### 3.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFFEND

### 3.1

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

##### *Inspection criteria*

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

We were pleased to find that initial assessments were largely completed in accordance with the national standard in 94% of the cases examined. The child or young person was involved in the assessment in 87% of cases and the parents/carers in 75%.

A full risk of serious harm assessment had not been completed in a significant number of relevant cases. Few of those assessed as likely to present a risk of harm to others had been referred to managers for oversight. However, a significant proportion were assessed as at risk of self-harm (21 or 36%), or at specific risk of harm from others (13 or 23%), indicating staff awareness at the vulnerability of the overall caseload.

Information from files read showed that although 71% of supervision plans were completed within the national standard timescale, only 58% met the contents requirement and just 39% of the objectives were assessed as SMART, as defined in the YJB effective practice guidelines.

Final warning cases were not bailed for YOT assessment prior to the delivery of the final warning. The assessment was, however, completed in accordance with national standards requirement following notification by the police.

The assessment of children's and young people's health needs appeared to be problematic due to the part-time funding of the post and we found a

backlog of cases. CAMHS seemed also to be stretched, with referral for assessments, if accepted, taking between 6 and 12 weeks and in some cases up to 18 months. In consequence, although other YOT staff used the SDQ in conjunction with ASSET, there was no health input into either the ASSET or PSRs. It was likely therefore that the full health needs of children and young people were not being properly assessed or met. The need for health intervention was evident from examination of the case files which showed that 25% of children and young people had a physical health need and 60% an emotional health need.

The education worker had negotiated the contribution of the local schools and both Conwy and Denbighshire LEAs in the development of the individual learning plan through ASSET. A written protocol had been developed which included pro formas for schools to complete when a child or young person was first referred to the YOT. The data identified the child's or young person's learning ability and needs, their pattern of school attendance and any remedial work necessary. The process was being piloted and although it was too early for the YOT to evaluate its contribution, it did provide useful information for case managers.

There were 16 schools in the YOT area. The education worker had developed links with all secondary schools, the strongest, most appropriately being with the PRUs and EOTASS.

**Good practice**

The YOT had introduced a pro forma for schools to complete when a child or young person is first referred to them in order to strengthen the education component in start ASSETs.

**Strengths:**

- ◆ YOT staff utilised ASSET and SDQ in their assessments.
- ◆ Children and young people were assessed in accordance with the requirements of national standards.
- ◆ Parents/carers and children and young people were engaged in these assessments.
- ◆ The recently introduced education pro forma ensured the appropriate contribution from the school into the assessment process.

**Areas for improvement:**

- ◆ There was no health worker involvement in the overall ASSET assessment and scores on individual children and young people.
- ◆ Risk of harm section of ASSET was not completed in all appropriate cases.
- ◆ The assessment of risk of harm to others and self was not integrated into the overall assessment of the child or young person.
- ◆ Managers should review and contribute to risk of harm to others assessment.
- ◆ Initial supervision plans were not always completed within the required national standard timescale and were not targeted or SMART.

## 3.2

### Interventions for children and young people who offend

#### *Inspection criteria*

- ◆ *Interventions are:*
  - *targeted in areas of assessed need such as education, health and parental relationships, etc*
  - *provided that are specific to the needs and offending behaviour of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups, those with disabilities and take account of safeguarding children and young people*
  - *consistent with the principles of effective practice.*
- ◆ *Frequency of appointments is consistent with national standards and Home Office/YJB guidance for final warnings, referral orders, community penalties, DTOs (custody and post-custody) and ISSPs (where they exist).*
- ◆ *Enforcement follows non-compliance.*

We found evidence of some innovative interventions to address children's and young people's criminogenic and welfare needs. However, less emphasis was placed on addressing offending behaviour and there was little group work provision. There were a number of high quality alternative learning opportunities for children and young people at both the pre- and post-crime stages. These included:

In partnership with the RSPB, Northrop Agriculture College, Careers Wales, LEA and NACRO

A one day per week skills-based programme of training in conservation was delivered over 33 weeks for years 10, 11 and post-16 school leavers. The course offered the children and young people the opportunity to gain OCNs and NVQs. Careers Wales endorsed the course as part of their 'Skillbuild' provisions and it was seen as a means of offering children and young people a practical start in the labour market.

#### The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

Worked closely with the YOT to provide children and young people with challenging personal development opportunities, which included community work, skills development, outdoors and adventure experiences. The project had seconded a member of staff to the YOT specifically to develop this work. The programme was the same as other Duke of Edinburgh provision, but provided closer personal support and supervision to ensure the challenge was appropriate to their personal and developmental needs. Children and young people were able to continue their work with Duke of Edinburgh through local open centres once they had completed their period of supervision by the YOT.

In partnership with local football clubs and the *Football in the Community Initiative*

Children and young people were given training in coaching skills

**Good  
practice**

Children and young people who participated in groups that addressed their offending behaviour or offending related issues, i.e. sessions on drug awareness could gain formal accreditation of their experience through the OCN. This could be combined with other activities to gain the full Duke of Edinburgh award.

The YOT's current caseload was 100% white. 96% of the cases samples were white British and 4% white Irish. The child's or young person's culture, religion, race and other specific needs were considered to have informed the ASSET in 73% of these cases and the supervision plan in 76%. The YOT offered good quality services to children and young people and their parents/carers. They showed particular sensitivity to issues of rurality by making a significant number of home visits and by offering bilingual services to those who required it.

The YOT, through YPSMS offered some discreet interventions, including sexual health groups for girls and young women. There was, however, no diversity plan or practice guidance. It was thus unclear what services might be available to a child or young person from a minority ethnic background or a child or young person who was disabled.

YOT staff demonstrated clear understanding of the principles of effective practice both in discussions and through their work with children and young people. There was a high degree of liaison between the caseworker and others providing interventions to the children and young people as well as work to motivate them and reinforce the work being carried out in 94% and 78% of cases respectively. There was a close fit between interventions planned and assessed risk of harm to others in 70% of cases which was followed up with appropriate interventions in 75%.

There was some evidence of targeting interventions to those areas of assessed needs. However, in half the cases read the plans had not been followed and there was no record in the case file to explain this departure. Only 68% of initial supervision plans had been reviewed in accordance with the national standard requirement.

A significant amount of partnership and project work was undertaken with children and young people involved with the YOT. Although this showed admirable elements of joint working, we also identified areas of concern particularly with regard to risk assessment, management and its recording. It was difficult to see how the work undertaken with children and young people was coordinated, monitored or evaluated. Some of this was reflected in the lack of SMART objectives in supervision plans and, as previously mentioned, by the failure to record departures from the original supervision plans. These omissions had lead to a seeming ad hoc process of engaging children and young people in various programmes at the same time.

The Home Office/YJB guidance had not been adopted in Conwy and Denbighshire with the result that the North Wales Police Force was not delivering final warnings consistently. There appeared to be loose arrangements for notifying the YOT when a final warning had been delivered and about the victim's details. This often broke down and the YOT was either not notified or the notification arrived late. We were told of occasions when multiple reprimands and final warnings or even cautions

had been given. There had also been times when, at the court's request, final warnings had been given at court by the YOT police officer rather than by the appropriate officer at the police station.

The police staff involved in administering final warnings had recently received restorative justice training and there was an expectation that this would lead to a change in practice. The take-up rate by children and young people assessed by the YOT police officers appeared good and the interventions were imaginative.

Referral order panel meetings were held within the required 20 working days in 77% of cases, whilst the contracts agreed at the meetings were delivered in all cases. However, attendance of victims at panels and direct or indirect reparation to victims was low.

ISSP became available to the YOT in October 2003. The programme was shared between four of the five North Wales YOTs. Although in its early stages of implementation, the scheme had started to contribute to the range of services available to the courts and children and young people who had offended. Its contribution to the community element of DTO supervision had not yet been developed. We understand that this work was progressing.

The resettlement work with children and young people serving DTOs was commendable. A specialist worker was responsible for all DTO work from sentence through to the end of the order. The worker attended all initial supervision planning and review meetings, often taking parents/carers along to these meetings and was observed to play a very active part. They also made regular visits to see the children and young people between reviews. Work started with the children and young person in custody, was followed-up post-release in all cases.

**Good practice**

A specialist worker was responsible for all DTO work from sentence through to the end of the order. The specialist worker attended all initial supervision planning and review meetings.

Enforcement was one of the YOT's strengths, 93% of appointments offered conformed to national standards requirements and 84% of these appointments were kept. Where appointments were not kept, judgements with regard to whether these absences were acceptable or unacceptable were made in 81% of cases and action with regard to breach or recall was taken in 92% of cases. These were excellent results.

**Good practice**

The YOT had secured funding to appoint a part-time worker to work with post-16 year olds because there was a lack of ETE provisions for this age group. The worker offered mentoring and other appropriate training.

### **Strengths:**

- ◆ Work with children and young people serving DTOs was followed up on release in all cases.
- ◆ Orders were properly enforced in accordance with national standards.
- ◆ There were good quality ETE opportunities.
- ◆ The YOT liaised well with others providing services to children and young people.
- ◆ There was a range of provisions in response to criminogenic needs.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- ◆ There was little offence focused work or group work provision.
- ◆ Final warnings were not being delivered by North Wales Police in accordance with the relevant guidance.
- ◆ ISSP was not available to those children and young people who needed extra support during the community part of their DTO supervision.
- ◆ The interventions developed did not fully address the diverse range of need within the local community.
- ◆ Supervision plans were not being used effectively to coordinate and review work undertaken with children and young people.

### **Good practice**

During final warning programmes, children and young people identified as remaining at further risk of offending were tracked and offered interventions for up to six months. Of 70 children and young people tracked only four had reoffended.

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

### **Inspection criteria**

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

ASSET scores showed improvement in 40% of the cases examined. More specifically, of the files read:

30% of the children and young people reoffended during their orders

69% complied with the orders

59% showed positive changes in their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour

46% showed an increased awareness of the effects of their behaviour on victims

45% showed an improvement in community ties and social circumstances

63% were applying learning and skills they had developed during YOT interventions

We interviewed a number of children and young people who spoke highly of the work of the YOT. All had received help with criminogenic factors in their lives, examples of areas identified include assistance with education, substance misuse, and family relationships. One young person, echoing the assessment made by inspectors following the case file read exercise, expressed disappointment that no one had talked to him about his offence. Children and young people were also not aware of how to make a complaint.

Seven parents/carers were interviewed and most commended the YOT and the services they had received. They found the YOT workers supportive and the interventions offered to children and young people helpful. One parent/carer expressed some concern regarding what was experienced as disorganisation during the initial stages of ISSP. However, they also expressed the wish that the YOT services were available over the weekend.

#### **Strengths:**

- ◆ Review ASSETs were being completed and showed positive changes in children's and young people's attitudes and behaviour.
- ◆ Parents/carers and children and young people were positive about their experience of the YOT.
- ◆ A significant percentage of children and young people learned useful skills which they were able to apply.

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

- ◆ Children and young people interviewed were not aware of a complaints procedure.

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

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

## 4.

## WORK WITH PARENTS/CARERS

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

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

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

There did not appear to be a structured process for identifying and referring parents/carers to the specialist parenting worker. Referrals were usually instigated following informal conversations between the worker and colleagues after which a referral form was completed. Assessment involved a visit to the parents/carers where their needs and potential as group participants were explored and any fears with regard to becoming involved in a group discussed.

Engaging parents/carers at this early stage was seen as a contributory factor to successful future involvement in a group and also had positive effects on the work with the child or young person. Where a group programme was not considered suitable, the parents/carers were offered some individual work.

In 74% of the cases we read, work with the children and young people had included rebuilding or maintaining relationship with their families. A significant amount of this work had been done during visits to the child's or young person's home.

#### ***Strengths:***

- ◆ Parents/carers were sensitively engaged and their informed consent sought.
- ◆ Parents/carers were offered choices between group and individual work.

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

- ◆ There was no proper referral process based on set criteria and structured assessment.

## 4.2

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

#### *Inspection criteria*

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

Parenting provisions within the YOT had been offered for three years and group work programmes, jointly organised and run with NCH Cymru had been available for one year. To date three parenting groups had taken place, catering for some 30 parents/carers. Fifteen had completed the programme, and six were attending a group during the inspection period. The YOT took advantage of a range of resources provided by the YJB including CD-ROMS and a research base.

The programme used by the Conwy-Denbighshire YOT was obtained from another YOT and adapted to meet local needs. It included sessions on single and step-parenting, reconstituted families and self-esteem. The programme ran for ten weeks with a further week for any missed sessions through illness, holidays or other commitments. Not all participants completed the whole programme, a fact which was, however, viewed positively by the YOT worker who attributed some absences to parents/carers obtaining employment empowered by their newly developed self-esteem. The programme had no structured evaluation process and the only means of measuring impact was through the completion of a feedback questionnaire by participants. The need for independent evaluation had, however, been recognised by the YOT and it was planning to negotiate with local universities to carry out this work. The evaluation was intended also to address the link between the offending behaviour and whether any of the children of these parents/carers had been taken into the care of the local authority.

Other parenting interventions were offered in the area, one was run by the NCH Cymru. There was also a programme for teenage parents to which the YOT could refer.

Transport was provided, if required, to parents/carers in rural areas attending programmes, and a bilingual service was offered through the make up of the staff group. Some parts of the area were attracting a significant number of people from surrounding areas and in particular northern England. And although it was stated that the parenting programme used was recognised as anti-oppressive, there did not appear to be any practice guidance or specific provisions for working with the parents/carers and home YOTs of children and young people in this group who offend. There was a similar lack of provision for parents/carers from other ethnic groups.

In the file read inspectors found that 75% of parents/carers were included in the assessment of their children and 92% were either involved or consulted during the supervision process. The involvement of

parents/carers was particularly demonstrated in DTO cases where the case worker engaged parents/carers in sentence planning, reviews and during every stage of the child's or young person's sentence.

**Strengths:**

- ◆ Interventions were based on effective practice guidelines.
- ◆ There were strong links between members of the team and other programmes locally and nationally.
- ◆ Parenting provisions were offered and taken up.
- ◆ Parents/carers were assisted with transport where needed and a bilingual service was available.

**Areas for improvement:**

- ◆ Statistics on referrals, take-up and completions were not maintained.
- ◆ No account had been taken of the changing nature of the population or of the needs of parents/carers from minority ethnic groups.

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

**Inspection criterion**

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

During the inspection seven parents/carers were interviewed by inspectors and although they were not all satisfied with every aspect of their involvement with the YOT, they were in the main very positive with regard to the service that they and their children had received. Their comments included:

*'It has helped me to wait until he calms down before I tackle issues and I try not to tell him off. It has made me more aware as a mother and helped my relationships with my six other children.'*

**Good practice**

The DTO worker took parents/carers to sentence planning and review meetings. This was particularly helpful as there were no YOIs in Wales and that children and young people were placed significant distances from their home areas.

**Strengths:**

- ◆ Parents/carers learnt useful parenting skills that were also used in their relationships with other children in the family.
- ◆ Parents/carers expressed satisfaction with the parenting programme and the way they were involved in their children's supervision.
- ◆ The YOT had produced information leaflets for parents/carers.

***Area for improvement:***

- ◆ There was a need to evaluate both group and individual programmes.

**Good  
practice**

Comment from parents/carers: 'They have changed his life. I think he would have been dead or in prison if they were not involved – he drinks less and is on an education programme'.

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

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

## 5.

## WORK WITH VICTIMS

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

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

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

The YOT had contracted its work with victims out to Victim Support and there was a service level and working agreement.

The arrangement between the two organisations was that two Victim Support workers each attended the YOT office twice weekly to collect written referrals, but in practice some referrals were either made over the telephone or were faxed. If the victim was already known to Victim Support they would then be visited at home. If not, the referral was returned for the YOT police officer to obtain the consent of the victim for contact to be made, as the North Wales Police would only reveal victims' details to the YOT police officers. It would appear that feedback to Victim Support following re-referral to the YOT police officers was not always made and a large percentage of victims were not therefore contacted.

Referrals to Victim Support were made post-sentence, resulting in a lack of victims perspectives in PSRs.

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

- ◇ Arrangements had been made to take forward work with victims.

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

- ◇ The referral and contact processes were not functioning properly.

## 5.2

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

#### **Inspection criteria**

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

Only 38% of victims from the case sample were consulted or invited to participate in restorative justice work with children and young people who had offended and 35% were consulted on other work undertaken with or by those who had offended. We were told of some good preventative work which resulted from contact with corporate victims with whom contact rates were said to be higher.

The YOT in partnership with NCH Cymru, provided a wide range of indirect reparation projects that benefited the community and developed children's and young people's skills and confidence. However, it would appear that victims' requests for a particular reparation activity were often not achieved as, according to YOT workers, victims often wanted to punish the offender rather than engage in restorative justice. This was indeed confirmed by one victim we interviewed who saw the reparation project on which the child or young person was placed as a treat rather than a punishment for their wrongdoing. It was apparent to us that victims were not aware of the role and responsibilities of the YOT, the processes within which they were being asked to participate, the purpose of or reasons for their participation and the possible benefits for them of engaging in restorative processes.

#### **Strength:**

- ◇ A wide range of indirect reparation projects were available that benefited the community.

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

- ◇ Well-organised victim satisfaction surveys should be conducted on a regular basis.
- ◇ Victims had little knowledge or understanding of the process with which they were being asked to engage and some were therefore understandably unwilling to participate.
- ◇ Enough effort had not been made to contact victims and to inform them of the YOT's work and restorative justice process.

### 5.3

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

### **Inspection criterion**

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

Victim participation in referral order panel meetings was infrequent, most victims either declined or asked Victim Support to attend on their behalf. Some victims who attended panel meetings reported that they felt the meetings were biased towards the child or young person and that they were not given enough opportunity to share their experience and express their views. Some felt that inappropriate behaviour by the child or young person during the panel meeting had not been addressed. Others, although sharing some of the views expressed above, also felt they had been treated with respect by panel members and that their attendance was worthwhile.

A number of victims had asked for feedback on the child's or young person's progress, but this was rarely given. The explanation was that there were no review processes in place to enable the provision of feedback to victims.

Although the Youth Justice Plan reported an 82.9% victim satisfaction, we could not find any form of formal reviews or questionnaires sent out to victims. Indeed the victims interviewed were not aware of the YOT's responsibilities to victims and did not know that the service they had received from Victim Support was indeed on behalf of, or in conjunction with the YOT.

### **Strengths:**

- ◇ Some victims had a positive experience of referral order panel meetings.
- ◇ The YOT had produced an information leaflet for victims.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- ◇ The YOT had taken little action to promote itself to the local community and victims in particular utilising the information leaflet.
- ◇ Many victims described their experience of referral order panel meetings as negative.
- ◇ The agreement with Victim Support should be reviewed in order that there is clarity of roles between both parties.

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

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

## The joint inspection of YOTs

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

### Home Office aims

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

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

The purpose of the joint inspection is to report to the Secretary of State and, through him, Parliament and the public, on the effectiveness of the YOTs in fulfilling their statutory duties to prevent offending by children and young people, and thereby protect the public, whilst still safeguarding their rights and promoting their welfare.

The **aims** of the programme are to:

- ◆ assess the impact made by YOTs and partner organisations on the prevention of offending by children and young people through effective supervision
- ◆ appraise the work undertaken by YOTs and partner organisations to meet the needs of children and young people at risk of offending and enable them to lead law-abiding and constructive lives
- ◆ evaluate the role of the YOTs in safeguarding the rights and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- ◆ assess the extent to which the YOTs are meeting the required standards and targets set by the YJB
- ◆ promote good practice in the management arrangements of YOTs and service delivery to the courts and community
- ◆ identify underperformance and make recommendations to promote improvements
- ◆ evaluate the effective use of resources
- ◆ actively promote race equality and diversity as an integral part of the inspection process
- ◆ produce timely reports which contribute to improved performance by informing policy and practice.

### **Code of practice**

Each inspection will:

- ◆ be undertaken with integrity in a professional, impartial and courteous manner
- ◆ enable the development of independent judgements, based on evidence
- ◆ seek to energise and engage with staff
- ◆ promote race equality and diversity throughout its processes
- ◆ be concluded with the timely publication of a report containing findings and recommendations for improvement.

Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within the remit of this inspection programme should write to:

*HM Chief Inspector of Probation  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ashley House  
2 Monck Street  
London SW1P 2BQ*

## Inspection arrangements

- ◇ The joint inspection programme started in September 2003, following two pilot inspections. All 155 YOTs in England and Wales are to be inspected over a five to six year cycle. As this is a long inspection programme, we decided to break it down into three phases in order to retain its relevance and ensure that it continues to consider local and national concerns. The three phases are:
  - **from September 2003 to July 2004**, when the inspection will concentrate on key issues, with emphasis placed on establishing benchmarks and the dissemination of good practice. YOTs are being asked to volunteer for this stage of the process
  - **up to September 2006**, during which time the inspections will be individually tailored to each YOT, based on an examination of the data available and the findings from other inspection programmes
  - **from September 2006 onwards**, where the inspection will focus on achievement against targets met, particularly on increasing overall performance and ensuring consistency of practice.
- ◇ The inspection will be carried out in line with the Government's commitment to proportionate and coordinated inspection in local government, informed by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment results and the Wales Programme for Improvement. We have therefore developed a programme that:
  - is proportionate to risk and only inspects those areas of work where a team is performing well in order to disseminate good practice
  - complements, and is coordinated with, other inspection programmes, including those currently being developed following the publication of the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters* (2003)
  - takes account of YOTs' recent development as organisations.
- ◇ Comprehensive standards and criteria have been developed to cover the first phase of the inspection, focusing on:
  - **management and partnership arrangements**
  - **children and young people considered at risk of offending**
  - **children and young people who offend**
  - **parents/carers of children and young people who are at risk of offending or who offend**
  - **victims.**
- ◇ Each site visit during the first phase will take place over two weeks, about two to three weeks apart. The YOT will be asked to identify a random, but statistically representative sample of between 50 and 120 children and young people (dependent on the workload) who have been subject to some form of intervention in the previous months. The cases will cover most orders, including licences.

- ◇ During the first week of the site visit, we will examine all these case files in detail. We will also, in half the cases selected, undertake in-depth interviews with the case manager, any other person significantly involved in delivering the intervention and, where possible, the child or young person themselves and their parents/carers. Where appropriate, we also hope to meet and hear from victims of crimes by children and young people supervised by the YOT.
- ◇ In order to encourage self-assessment and increase ownership of the inspection findings, we are inviting YOTs to second a member of their staff, usually an experienced practitioner, to the inspection team for the duration of the file reading week. We believe that this can be a positive way of developing mutual understanding and helps to strengthen the links between inspection and practice.
- ◇ The second week of the inspection will involve meetings with the CEO, Management Board members, YOT manager and staff. It will cover the management of the YOT, its performance and the contribution made by its partner organisations. Discussions will be informed by the findings of the examination of case files conducted in the first week of inspection.
- ◇ The inspection findings will be compiled in a report which will include recommendations for improvement. These recommendations will be designed to encourage the YOT in its work, to support good practice and to promote improvements.
- ◇ The report will be submitted to the Home Secretary, as the Secretary of State responsible for youth justice, with simultaneous copies to the Education and Health Secretaries and where relevant, the Ministers for Education & Lifelong Learning, Finance, Local Government & Communities, and Health & Social Services in Wales. A copy will be sent to the YJB. Copies will also be made available to the press and placed on the website of HMI Probation at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/probation/inspprob>

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in 2003.

- ◇ The file reading took place week commencing 10 November.
- ◇ The second week commenced on 1 December.

## Scoring approach

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

- ◆ information supplied by the YOT
- ◆ interviews with chief officers, managers and staff both from the YOT and other partner organisations
- ◆ reading case files
- ◆ discussions with case managers and other people significantly involved in the supervisory process
- ◆ the perspectives of the children and young people, their parents/carers and, where possible, their victims.

The judgements are defined as:

- ◆ **Fully met** – denoting exceptional performance beyond the requirements of national standards and other relevant guidelines
- ◆ **Satisfactorily met** – strong performance on the majority of items and at least satisfactory on the remainder, meeting the requirements of national standards and other relevant guidelines
- ◆ **Partly met** – less than satisfactory performance on the majority of items
- ◆ **Not met** – inadequate performance on most items.

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

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

The performance of the YOT will be assessed as:

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

### Next steps

- ◆ The YOT will be asked to send a response to the recommendations, to the lead inspector, together with an action plan within three months of the publication of the report. It is anticipated that the recommendations are normally addressed within 12 months of publication to allow sufficient time for integration within existing developments.
- ◆ Implementation of the recommendations is to be monitored by the YJB. The joint inspection programme does not normally include any follow-up action unless issues were to emerge during the course of the programme that were of such serious concern to require immediate attention. The inspection of the Conwy-Denbighshire YOT has not revealed any such concerns.
- ◆ In addition to the reports on individual YOTs, the joint inspection team will also publish periodic reports on findings across a number of teams. Such reports will include comments on race equality and diversity issues and other trend information. These reports will also include comparisons between the performance of YOTs with similar characteristics.