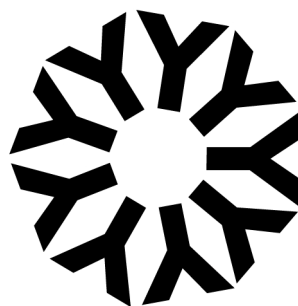


*Commission for Social Care Inspection
Estyn
Healthcare Commission
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
Office for Standards in Education
Social Services Inspectorate for Wales*



Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:
Staffordshire
Youth Offending Service

2006

Foreword

This is one of the first reports to be published in the third phase of the inspection of Youth Offending Teams across England and Wales. We found a committed and positive staff team, ably led by a new Head of Service. The service was well managed, enjoyed good working relationships with a range of partners and focused firmly on reducing crime and safeguarding children and young people.

We were particularly impressed by the quality of work being undertaken in the courts. Initial assessments were mostly completed on time, to a good standard, and we found some innovative interventions in place to address the individual needs of children and young people. More attention needed, however, to be given to the development of procedures for assessing and managing risk of harm. The quality of supervision plans also required improvement. Outcomes of the work undertaken should be evaluated and the results used to inform future practice.

Overall we felt that the Staffordshire Youth Offending Service was well placed to address the issues raised by the inspection. This report contains a number of recommendations which we believe will assist the team in consolidating its existing work and continuing to make progress.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

December 2005

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in July and September 2005.

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Glossary

ACPC	Area Child Protection Committee
ADSIS	Alcohol and Drug Services in Staffordshire
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
COG	Chief Officer Group
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DTO	Detention and Training Order
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
FGC	Family Group Conference
HMI Prisons	HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
ISP	Initial Supervision Plan
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
JAR	Joint Area Review
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ONSET	Assessment tool developed by the YJB to assess children and young people at risk of offending
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSR	Pre-sentence report
ROLAC	Reducing Reoffending of Looked After Children
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
SSR	Specific sentence report
YISP	Youth Inclusion and Support Panel
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOI	Young Offenders Institution
YOIS	Youth Offending Information System
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YOT	Youth Offending Team

Introduction

The joint YOT inspection programme began in September 2003 and is the first full inspection programme to examine the work of the YOTs. The programme is being implemented in three phases and covers all 155 YOTs in England and Wales over a five year cycle.

This, the third phase of the inspection, started in September 2005 and includes all YOTs not previously inspected in phases one and two. Its methodology has been developed to complement that of the JARs of Children's Services in England, and inspections undertaken as part of the WPI, and of youth support services under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 in Wales. Although the YOT programme remains a separate process in both England and Wales, inspections are conducted within a similar timeframe as these other inspection arrangements wherever possible, so that any areas of potential overlap or duplication can be rationalised and reduced.

The YOT inspection covers five core areas of work:

- ◆ management and partnership arrangements, including the role and functioning of the local Board
- ◆ work in the courts
- ◆ work with children and young people in the community
- ◆ work with children and young people subject to DTOs
- ◆ victims and restorative justice.

Findings from the YOT inspection inform not only the JAR and but also the Corporate Assessment, APA and CPA in England, and in Wales inspections undertaken as part of the WPI and of youth support services.

On conclusion of the inspection, the YOT is asked to prepare an action plan, responding to the recommendations. Once agreed, the action plan is forwarded to the YJB to monitor its implementation.

Overview of the area

- ◆ The County of Staffordshire is located in the West Midlands of England.
- ◆ Staffordshire had a total population of 806,744, measured in the Census 2001. Of this population, 22.3% were aged 0-17 years at the time of the census. This figure was higher than the average for England and Wales of 22.7%.
- ◆ Staffordshire had a predominantly white population, 96.2%, and this was much higher than the average for England of 90.9%. The percentage of Asian or Asian British residents, 1.7%, was much lower than the average for England of 4.6%. The percentage of Black or Black British residents, at 0.3%, was also much lower than the English average of 2.1%.
- ◆ The level of employment in Staffordshire, 63.4%, was higher than the average for England and Wales of 60.6%. The level of unemployment was 2.8%, lower than the average for England and Wales at 3.4%. There was a higher percentage of retired residents living in Staffordshire, 14.4% compared to 13.6% in England and Wales.
- ◆ Staffordshire Council was classified as 'fair' in the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2004.
- ◆ The YJB figures for youth offending for the period April 2003 to March 2004 show that 34.9 offences were committed per 1,000 children and young people aged 0-17 years in Staffordshire.
- ◆ The YJB summary of YOT performance against the key performance indicators for 2003/2004 ranked Staffordshire YOS in 68th position.

Scoring summary

4: Excellent; 3: Good; 2: Adequate; 1: Inadequate.

	Section score
Management	3
Work in the courts	4
Work with children and young people in the community	2
Work with children and young people subject to DTOs	3
Victims and restorative justice	2

Overall assessment

The YOS was well managed and generally well resourced and provided a range of intensive and innovative services to children and young people. Although the initial assessments of children and young people were good, some areas, such as the assessment and management of risk of harm and objective setting in supervision planning, required significant improvement. Work in courts was a particular strength and linkages with local YOIs for children and young people on DTOs were effective. The service provided to victims required attention, however. Work with parents/carers and prevention work was developing and, overall, the YOS operated well within the local communities.

Diversity issues

The YOS worked with all children and young people in a highly individualised way that enabled diversity needs to be identified and addressed. However, more attention needed to be given to methods of engagement with children and young people from minority ethnic groups, as well as girls and young women, younger children and those with learning and mobility specific needs. The recent establishment of the Diversity Group would provide a positive, formal forum for explicitly driving forward the work of the YOS in this area.

Key statistics

File reading statistic	YOS file read score	Average for phase two YOTs	Range for phase two YOTs	YJB targets*
	(% cases)			
Initial assessment completed in accordance with national standards requirements:				
– timeliness	95%	84%	70-97%	
– adequate quality	86%	71%	29-93%	
Full risk of harm to others completed on relevant cases	36%	54%	17-83%	
Evidence of management oversight in risk of harm cases	25%	41%	0-100%	
ISP meets the content requirements of national standards and contains SMART objectives	40%	52%	17-96%	
Frequency of appointments arranged broadly conform to national standards, to the requirements of order/licence, and to any risk of harm considerations	73%	75%	52-100%	
Judgements about acceptability/unacceptability of absences are appropriate	85%	71%	40-96%	
Breach/recall action has taken place, if required, within the national standards timescale	40%	49%	13-100%	
Evidence of any criminal activity during the course of the order	22%	29%	15-48%	
Appropriate action has been taken if a child or young person is considered vulnerable to harm from self and others.	75%	95%	67-100%	
Effective action is taken where there is evidence of educational difficulties	86%	60%	33-81%	
Appropriate referrals are made in cases of:				
– physical health	100%	n/a	n/a	
– mental/emotional health	72%	n/a	n/a	
– substance misuse	95%	n/a	n/a	
Victim was consulted about restorative/reparative justice work with child or young person	28%	45%	6-72%	

*if appropriate

Key findings

- ◆ **Management and partnership arrangements** – The management and leadership arrangements of the YOS were good. The Chief Executive of Staffordshire County Council chaired the COG. The newly appointed Head of Service had demonstrated her enthusiasm and commitment to the YOS with the actual or planned implementation of several changes to policies and procedures.

Protocols existed with all statutory and voluntary partner agencies, although some of these were outdated and required amendments. The staff and managers were enthusiastic and committed, with positive and flexible attitudes to their work. All staff reported feeling supported in their work and received regular and frequent supervision. A training plan was in place, although some priority areas of training were not included.

- ◆ **Work in the courts** – Each YOT within the YOS had a dedicated team of court personnel who had developed good relationships with the courts. The bail work was timely and thorough, with bail packages individually tailored to each child and young person. PSRs were allocated by the team managers within each YOT, and a system of gate-keeping was in operation which required development. Although training for staff in PSR writing was lacking, overall the quality of the work in the courts was judged to be excellent.

- ◆ **Work with children and young people in the community** – Barnardo's provided the YISPs across Staffordshire, with some input from the YOS in terms of attendance by its staff at the panels. At the time of the inspection, there was no clear conceptualisation of the full extent of the prevention work across the county. Responsibility for the development of a prevention strategy had been delegated to the Head of Service who was now taking this work forward.

Work with children and young people who had offended was varied and constructive. However, there was no mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the work done in most areas of provision. There was no risk management policy for the YOS and the procedures for the assessment, management and oversight of the higher risk cases were inadequate and not formalised.

The health and education needs of children and young people were generally met, and the provision of the ROLAC project was positive, although work was required to develop the evaluation of the impact of the project. The parenting interventions delivered by the YOS, and the relationships between the YOS and other agencies providing these, were developing positively.

- ◇ **Work with children and young people subject to DTOs** – There were generally good communication and working arrangements between the YOS and the local YOIs, with clear continuity of service provision for children and young people on release from DTOs.
- ◇ **Victims and restorative justice** – The police seconded to the YOS undertook the victim liaison role, whilst indirect reparation was facilitated by the Community Payback Team. Individualised assessments of the needs of the victims as well as the children and young people in restorative and reparative interventions were undertaken, although it was not always possible to match the needs of the children and young people with the specific projects to which they were allocated. There was very little take-up by victims in terms of engagement with the YOS and there appeared to be no clear understanding of the reasons for this.

Recommendations

The Chair of the COG should ensure that:

- ◇ an action plan is devised to address the following recommendations and forwarded to the lead inspector within three months of the publication of this report
- ◇ the role and functioning of the COG is reviewed to integrate the work of the YOS into that of the County Council and partner organisations
- ◇ a comprehensive CRB policy is developed and implemented, to include specific procedures for updating CRB checks for existing members of staff.

The YOS Head of Service should ensure that:

- ◇ the terms of reference of the Strategic Management Team are revised to reflect the team's explicit remit of driving the work of the COG
- ◇ all partnership protocols and attachments are reviewed annually and updated as appropriate
- ◇ a risk management policy, including MAPPAs for the YOS, is developed and implemented, so that risk of harm assessments are completed on all appropriate cases, reviewed by managers and files annotated as appropriate
- ◇ the Training Plan for 2005/2006 is amended to include the provision of training for all staff in relation to risk management and MAPPAs
- ◇ work is undertaken to develop the objectives set in the supervision plans, to make them more SMART
- ◇ work is done to increase the engagement with victims in referral panels and direct reparation activities.

Staffordshire Probation Service should ensure that:

- ◇ an effective system of communication between the service and the YOS is formalised in relation to children and young people with unpaid work elements to their orders.

Staffordshire Police should ensure that:

- ◇ its final warning policy and delivery are in line with Home Office/YJB guidance and national standards.

1. MANAGEMENT

1.1 Leadership

Key judgement:

- ◆ *The Management Board provides strategic oversight and direction, and coordinates the provision of youth justice services by the YOT and partner organisations.*

The Staffordshire YOS was located outside the County Council structures but linked to its different departments through the Chief Executive who chaired the COG and line managed the Head of Service. The COG met quarterly and consisted of senior representatives of statutory partner organisations, together with a Connexions representative who had recently been asked to join as an advisor. Its role was to act as the strategic driver for the YOS. A Strategic Management Team, chaired by the Head of Service, met monthly and consisted of all YOS operational and administrative managers. The current Head of Service took up post in April 2005.

Strengths:

- ◆ The Chief Executive of Staffordshire County Council chaired the COG.
- ◆ The new Head of Service had clear strategic vision and was enthusiastic and dedicated to continuing to improve the performance of the service. Despite her recent appointment, she had already implemented several changes in policies and procedures and others were planned.
- ◆ The Head of Service received professional support from the Deputy Corporate Director for Vulnerable Children, who was the previous Head of Service.
- ◆ Reports were provided by the Head of Service to the COG meeting, outlining the YJB performance data and service development issues. These reports made up a substantial part of the agenda of the COG. The Head of Service attended pre-meetings with the Chief Executive to discuss their contents with him and was planning to develop the reports further in order to facilitate strategic attention to key practice issues.
- ◆ The COG had signed off the Youth Justice Plan.
- ◆ The recent addition of the Connexions representative to the COG was a positive move.
- ◆ A Research and Performance Manager was being recruited to take forward the work of reviewing, monitoring and evaluating service

information. This reflected a positive shift in emphasis towards performance management and the use of data to improve practice.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ The YOS Youth Justice Plan did not sufficiently link into the Community Safety Strategies for the eight CDRPs across the county.
- ◇ The memorandum of agreement in relation to the COG was outdated and required revision.
- ◇ Due to the location of the YOS within the County Council, and the lack of representation of other key organisations and voluntary partners on either the COG or the Strategic Management Team, there was no explicit forum for driving the YOS agenda forward at the next strategic level with each of the partnership agencies. This was achieved through informal means, with the Head of Service working in relative isolation, without recognised links with the partner agencies at any level other than the most senior managers who attended the COG.
- ◇ Until recent times, the work of the COG had focused mainly on the budget allocated by the probation service to the YOS. This issue was recognised by members of the group as having detracted from other service matters.

1.2 Partnership and resources

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Partner organisations and the YOT work together to deter children and young people from offending.*

Protocols existed with all the statutory and voluntary partner agencies with whom Staffordshire YOS engaged. A number of voluntary partnership arrangements were in place across the YOS. At the time of the inspection, recruitment was underway for a number of specialist coordinator/manager posts within the YOS.

Strengths:

- ◇ The YOS appeared to have been generally well resourced, although there had been a number of gaps in staffing in the recent past that have now been resolved.
- ◇ From September 2005 in-house education would be provided for children and young people on ISSPs.
- ◇ The administration manager had been both flexible and creative in providing administrative cover for areas of the YOS that had previously been under-resourced.

- ◇ Strong partnership arrangements existed between the YOS and the NSPCC, who provided interventions for children and young people who engaged in sexually harmful behaviour.
- ◇ The partnership with ADSIS was clearly defined in a comprehensive contract, and was effective in practice. ADSIS linked to the YOS through the Deputy Head of Service in order to identify and remedy any gaps in service provision.
- ◇ The Head of Service was a member of the ACPC and sat on the Children in Prisons sub-group.
- ◇ She was also a member of the LCJB and led on the Public Confidence Delivery sub-group. Additionally, managers from the YOS contributed to several sub-groups that reported to the LCJB.
- ◇ A SLA between the Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate and the YOS for ROLAC was in the process of being signed.
- ◇ Effective partnerships had recently been developed in relation to parenting work across the county. The success of these arrangements had contributed to other agencies wanting to engage with the YOS in the provision of parenting interventions to a wider range of areas of the county. At the time of the inspection, a parenting coordinator was being recruited to the YOS to take forward this work.
- ◇ The recent development of the Diversity Group within the YOS was a positive progression.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ The Youth Justice Plan did not reflect partner strategies or outline the commitment of partner agencies to the work of the YOS other than in terms of their financial contributions.
- ◇ The community safety strategies for the District Councils did not make sufficient reference to the contribution of the YOS to the delivery of the strategies, and there was no linkage to the Youth Justice Plan.
- ◇ Some of the protocols and attachments with statutory and voluntary agencies were out of date and needed to be reviewed and updated.
- ◇ The partnership working of the YOS with the health sector had been hindered by the lack of consistent and effective engagement with the six PCTs as the commissioners of health services relevant to the YOS.
- ◇ There was some variation across the service in access to education and training provision, particularly in the more rural areas of the county.
- ◇ The Connexions provision was inconsistent across the county, although plans were in place to increase the resources across the YOS.
- ◇ Although the Head of Service attended the Strategic Management Boards for MAPPA in Staffordshire, the YOS did not have a risk

management policy, and its staff worked to the MAPPA policy developed by the Public Protection Unit for Staffordshire Probation Service.

- ◇ There was no evidence that staff had completed formal training in MAPPA. Evidence from the case sample indicated that MAPPA procedures were neither fully understood nor embedded in practice in the YOS.
- ◇ At the time of the inspection, the YOS had no accommodation strategy, although one was being drafted in conjunction with Staffordshire Probation Service and Stoke-on-Trent YOS. Resources in relation to accommodation for children and young people were considered to be seriously lacking.
- ◇ The office accommodation at the Lichfield YOT did not provide sufficient facilities for meeting with children and young people and their parents/carers. This impacted considerably on the work of the staff who carried out home visits routinely over a wide geographical area.

Good practice

All interventions undertaken with children and young people who engaged in sexually harmful behaviour occurred jointly with the NSPCC, who co-worked the cases and provided specialist input as well as support to YOS practitioners.

1.3 Staff supervision, development and training

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Positive outcomes for children and young people are enhanced by effective staff.*

It was the responsibility of the Operational Management Group to develop, implement and evaluate policies and protocols within the YOS. Historically the policies and procedures adopted by the YOS in many areas were those developed within the Social Care and Health Directorate of Staffordshire County Council. A new post of Research and Performance Manager had been created and, once recruited, the post holder would have oversight of policy development, monitoring and review. A Training Plan was available for 2005/2006. The YOS was a pilot site for the YJB's Personal Development Portfolio for operational staff.

Strengths:

- ◇ The staff and managers seen by the inspection team in the YOS were enthusiastic and committed. They had positive and flexible attitudes towards their work and seemed to identify strongly with Staffordshire YOS. There was evidence of a strong corporate approach to work

across the three YOTs as well as the ISSP team. All teams used consistent working practices, whilst ensuring flexibility in meeting the diverse needs of the local areas within which each team was based.

- ◆ Guidance documents were available to correspond with the different requirements of working practices across the YOS. These had recently been reviewed to ensure compliance with changes to national standards and YJB requirements. The documents were process focused to provide 'off the shelf' tools for staff to use in their practice.
- ◆ All policies were published on the YOS shared computer drive in order that they were accessible by all staff.
- ◆ The majority of staff received regular and frequent formal and informal supervision within the YOS, and all staff reported feeling supported in their work.
- ◆ An experienced Human Resources and Training Manager had been permanently seconded to the YOS since January 2005 from the Chief Executive's Office, to provide strategic support and develop an overall human resources strategy for the service.
- ◆ Team managers and assistant team managers from the YOTs, as well as managers from headquarters were enrolled together on the Institute of Leadership and Management Level 3 Certificate in First Line Management, with a scheduled completion date of October 2005. This represented a significant outlay of management resources from the service in order to enable the managers to attend the course together.
- ◆ A compliments and complaints strategy had recently been drafted by the YOS to replace the County Council's compliments and complaints strategy which the YOS had previously worked to.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ It was not possible to clarify the degree to which the guidance documents for working practices within the YOS were used by staff.
- ◆ Although appraisal of operational staff was being addressed by the YJB pilot, there was no formal appraisal process for other staff. Appraisals were undertaken in an informal way as part of supervision, but sometimes staff did not recognise the experience as an appraisal.
- ◆ It was unclear how the training needs of staff without appraisals were identified, as it appeared to be a largely informal process.
- ◆ Some priority areas of training were not included on the Training Plan for 2005/2006 (e.g. MAPPA and risk of harm assessment processes).
- ◆ There appeared to be no evaluation processes in place to assess the effectiveness of training.
- ◆ The County Council had no CRB policy for workers. At the time of the inspection several members of the YOS staff had been in post for a

significant period of time and had still not had CRB checks. There were no procedures for updating the CRB checks.

**Good
practice**

A decision had been made to allow the team and assistant team managers to be released together in order that they could all attend the management training course at the same time, although it was acknowledged that doing so had a substantial impact on the resources in the YOS. This provided excellent opportunities for the managers' development.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT

This section is judged as good.

2.

WORK IN THE COURTS

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Good working relationships exist between the YOT and the local court.*

The County of Staffordshire included three Petty Sessional Divisions (North, Central and South West, and South East). There were a total of five Youth Courts and two Crown Courts across the county, all of which were serviced by Staffordshire YOS. A number of different meeting structures were in place, within and across each Petty Sessional Division. These meetings included Court User Groups in each of the Divisions, a County Youth Court User Group, and Divisional Youth Court Panel meetings. The Operational Manager of the YOS attended the meetings. Additionally, every three months Youth Panel Chair meetings were held between the Panel Chairs and the Heads of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent YOSs.

Each YOT within Staffordshire YOS had a dedicated team of court personnel and support staff who covered all of the courts within Staffordshire. They attended key meetings and worked closely with magistrates and clerks to the courts. Guidance documents existed which specified the procedures for YOS staff to follow at all stages of the court process.

Strengths:

- ◆ A newly signed operational agreement was in place across all court areas with the YOS, and a protocol existed for Staffordshire Youth Court Panels.
- ◆ The routine deployment of the same core group of YOS staff to court work enabled the development of good relationships between the YOS and the courts.
- ◆ There was good representation to all court sessions, including weekends and Bank Holidays. This was achieved by the effective use of a duty rota system.
- ◆ Senior managers and some core court staff from the YOS regularly attended the court meetings across the three Petty Sessional Divisions. The meetings contained a training component enabling specific areas of YOS work to be presented to the court staff in attendance.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The quality of linkage between the COG and the courts required improvement. The representative from Her Majesty's Court Services on the COG had not attended any of the previous six meetings.
- ◆ Whilst there was some input to magistrates and other court staff across the Staffordshire courts, the YOS could have done more to ensure that the magistrates and other relevant court staff had a clear and up-to-date understanding of the restorative and reparative interventions available, as well as the other interventions and activities available to the children and young people through the YOS.

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Effective practice with children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT within the courts.*

Strengths:

- ◆ Bail support staff and court duty officers showed enthusiasm and dedication to their work. They demonstrated a clear commitment to the delivery of a high quality and individually tailored service to the children and young people across Staffordshire.
- ◆ In the sample assessed during the inspection, nearly all of the children and young people who were made the subject of community sentences or bail supervision and support programmes had their first appointments within one working day of the court appearance.
- ◆ Information was provided to children and young people on the day they were made the subject of bail supervision and support programmes.
- ◆ Bail support staff supplemented the bail Asset with additional information about the vulnerability of the children and young people, which they then transferred to the computer Asset when they returned to the office.

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Children and young people are safeguarded and the likelihood of their further offending reduced by the provision of appropriate services, including bail supervision and support programmes.*

Strengths:

- ◆ A guidance document was available which stipulated the procedures for YOS staff when a child or young person was remanded to the care of the local authority.

- ◇ A simple system of daily telephone checks with each court was used to identify any children or young people who could have been potentially remanded either to the care of the local authority or to a YOI.
- ◇ The YOS's bail packages were individually tailored to each child and young person and were thorough and intensive, often including ISSP conditions. Court staff welcomed these.
- ◇ Staff undertook regular remand visits in order to facilitate assessment and follow-up of the children and young people.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Courts are assisted in making informed decisions by the provision of good quality reports from the YOT.*

The allocation of PSRs for completion was undertaken by the team managers within each of the YOTs, based on staff workload.

Strengths:

- ◇ The PSRs assessed as part of the inspection had, in most cases, been written to the required format and were of sufficient quality.
- ◇ 90% of PSRs contained a clear proposal for sentencing, and in all cases this proposal was commensurate with the seriousness of the offence.
- ◇ In 90% of cases examined, the sentence given to the child or young person corresponded with that recommended in the report.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ It was not possible to clarify the procedures for ensuring that copies of PSRs were given to the children and young people and parents/carers in good time. The system which aimed to furnish the children and young people and parents/carers, where appropriate, with copies of the report was implemented in an ad-hoc way. Time and resource constraints sometimes prevented the reports from being provided prior to the child's or young person's attendance at court.
- ◇ There was no specific training or guidance available for YOS staff completing PSRs. This had led to some staff feeling overwhelmed and anxious when allocated a PSR, as they felt ill-equipped to undertake the task effectively.
- ◇ Although a gate-keeping system had been in operation within the YOS, it was felt that the system could be developed and utilised further as a training tool and 'aide memoir' as to the required content and style of the reports. The tick box style of the current system made it appear superficial and subjective and limited the value of the system for the report writers in terms of developing their practice.

Work was required in the development of quality in specific areas of the PSR. Several cases were assessed as having not sufficiently included an offence analysis as distinct from a description of the offence(s). Additionally, some cases did not satisfactorily differentiate between risk of harm and risk of reoffending in the risk section of the PSR.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK IN THE COURTS

This section is judged as excellent.

3. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

3.1 Work with children and young people at risk of offending

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Children and young people are prevented from offending.*

Barnardo's won the contract to provide the YISPs across Staffordshire until March 2006. It was also responsible for the delivery of the pilot combined Family Group Conference (FGC)/YISP service. Barnardo's managed the YISPs and Staffordshire YOS provided members of staff to attend the five panels across the county. The YOS also provided three workers to the YISP team to work on the YISP/FGC pilot which was to run until March 2006. The YOS identified children and young people who were then assessed using ONSET and retained the responsibility for the Prevention KPI.

Strengths:

- ◇ The Head of Service had responsibility for the development of a prevention strategy for the county, with a deadline of December 2005. Some significant progress had already been made, including the development and implementation of a draft plan which identified short, long and medium-term strategic and operational goals.
- ◇ Youth Crime Prevention Coordinators had been recruited to the YOS to take forward prevention work across the county. At the time of the inspection, the postholders were undertaking a scoping exercise to identify the extent of the provision across the county.
- ◇ Plans were in place to recruit a Prevention Manager to the YOS.
- ◇ A good communication system existed between the YOS and Barnardo's in the sharing of information held by the YOS about the YISP cases. The YOS also shared resources (e.g. intervention packs) with the YISPs.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ There was no clear conceptualisation of the full extent of the provision of prevention work across the county. The absence of an overarching strategy meant that the work being undertaken was ad hoc and lacked a coherent direction. The YOS recognised this and had done a substantial amount of work to address the issue.
- ◇ The procedures for identifying children and young people over the age of 13 who were at risk of offending were unspecified.

- ◇ There was a lack of clarity in the working arrangements between Barnardo's who ran the YISP, and the YOS who had responsibility for the performance of the YISP in relation to the 10-13 age group. It was not clear how this responsibility would be exercised should the YOS fail to achieve the target for work undertaken on its behalf by Barnardo's.
- ◇ Analysis of the trends of first time offenders over the preceding two years by the YOS showed an increase in the number of first time offenders entering the Youth Justice System in Staffordshire.

3.2 Work with children and young people who have offended

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Children and young people who have offended are prevented from reoffending.*

Staffordshire YOS was split into three teams, as well as having a separate ISSP team, Intensive Fostering team and Youth Crime Prevention team. Each YOT was managed by a team manager, with two assistant team managers. The YOTs were located in the north, south and central area of the county, with the most northern YOT holding proportionally slightly fewer cases than the other two teams. Over recent times the service had changed its Asset database management system to YOIS, then YOIS+, having previously used Protege.

Strengths:

- ◇ 95% of the initial Assets scrutinised in the inspection sample had been completed in accordance with the national standard timescale and 86% were considered to be of good quality. They routinely involved the children and young people in their completion and took account of any diversity needs of the children and young people.
- ◇ The ISSP was delivered by a specialist team who were committed and enthusiastic. It was available for all children and young person who were eligible and was frequently used as part of bail packages. It included a range of innovative behavioural and educational elements and a weekend rota which alternated weekly between offending behaviour work, outdoor pursuits, and outdoor reparation projects (e.g. gardening).
- ◇ The Addicted to Sport programme was available as part of the ISSP, as well as being an intervention available for other children and young people within the YOS. The programme aimed to promote self-discipline and control whilst improving understanding of a healthy lifestyle and introducing the children and young people to a sporting activity (boxing, football or rugby). It also aimed to raise awareness about the harm caused by substance misuse. We observed one

session and found it to be an extremely positive, interactive and structured programme that effectively engaged the children and young people in developing a healthy lifestyle and learning sporting techniques and skills.

- ◆ The YOS had close links with the NSPCC in Staffordshire, which received funding from the YOS and the Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate to provide an NSPCC worker in each of the three YOTs. All children and young people convicted of sexual offences were referred to the NSPCC who assessed their needs, working jointly with YOS staff to address their offending behaviour.
- ◆ The YOS provided a range of programmes for children and young people who had offended and who misused drugs or alcohol, including TANKED, more TANKED, HEMP (substance misuse programmes), Xtinguish (a programme for firesetters), and BUSTED (a programme for children and young people who had committed burglaries). These interventions were also used with children and young people at risk of offending.
- ◆ The YOS had a small reparation team which was active in the pursuit of new partnerships and projects. The health and safety of the children and young people attending the projects was a prime concern and projects were chosen carefully in order to ensure an appropriate spread throughout the county.
- ◆ Home visits were undertaken routinely as normal contact across the YOS. This was because of the transport difficulties in the county, and contributed to a high level of attendance by children and young people at the scheduled appointments.
- ◆ The judgements about failure to attend appointments were acceptable in 85% of the relevant cases in the inspection sample.

Good practice

The Addicted to Sport programme had a high profile within the YOS and the local community. It was a positive and effective initiative for the development of pro-social behaviour and attitudes in children and young people within the YOS. The multi-disciplinary staff group who worked on the programme were enthusiastic, focused and skilled, and received positive feedback from the children and young people who had completed it. The inbuilt mechanisms for evaluating the impact of the programme allowed for the continued development of the programme in the future.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The procedures for assessment, management and oversight of the higher risk cases were inadequate and not formalised. There was no risk assessment and management policy in place within the YOS. A full risk of harm assessment had not been completed in 64% (nine out of 14) of the relevant cases examined. Only one of the four cases considered, which should have been referred on to a manager (by

virtue of the risk assessment undertaken), contained evidence that it had been reviewed.

- ◇ MAPPA were not widely understood by staff and they were not used adequately for children and young people whose violent behaviour made them a risk to others. It was seen as primarily for the risk management of children and young people engaging in sexually harmful behaviour.
- ◇ Although the majority of relevant cases examined had timely supervision plans, which took account of individual needs, and demonstrated a close fit between the interventions planned and the assessed risk of harm, further work was required to develop the objectives. Additionally, more attention was needed to suitable victim restorative processes.
- ◇ The arrangements for managing and communicating final warnings between the police and the YOS required attention. In six of the 11 cases in the sample the police had not notified the YOS within one working day of the decision to issue a final warning. Additionally, the police often did not notify the YOS of victim details in accordance with final warning guidance. As a result, victims were only invited to become involved in the final warning process in approximately half of the potentially relevant cases. There was no system in place whereby final warning cases could be bailed for an assessment by the YOT.
- ◇ The system for allocation of referral cases disrupted the continuity of the work with the children and young people involved.
- ◇ Victims were rarely present at referral panels, and reparation was seldom direct. Panels were sometimes held outside the timescale set by the national standard.
- ◇ Communication between the YOS case managers and Staffordshire Probation Service community punishment case managers was poor in relation to the management of children and young people undertaking community punishment elements to their orders. In all of the cases seen during the inspection, the YOS case managers were unaware of the behaviour and attendance of the children and young people on their community punishment. This lack of communication made appropriate enforcement difficult to manage.
- ◇ There was only a limited service available for children and young people with offending behaviour needs in relation to anger management and/or violence and aggression.
- ◇ YOS staff recognised that more work needed to be done to address the specific needs of Asian children and young people in Staffordshire who were at risk of offending and reoffending. It was planned that the Diversity Group would take forward this work.
- ◇ With the exception of the Addicted to Sport programme, there were no resources or procedures in place to evaluate the behavioural impact of any specific services offered by the YOS. This gap was being rectified by the recruitment of a Research and Development

Manager who would have responsibility for (amongst other things) conducting evaluations of the effectiveness of services.

- ◇ More than half (17 out of 29) of the cases within the inspection sample that included a review of the Asset score of the child or young person did not show an improvement from the overall score.
- ◇ Data from the Youth Justice Board 2000/2001 cohort indicated that the recidivism rate for children and young people who had been supervised by Staffordshire YOS had increased by 6%, although the rate was lower than the national average.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *The health of children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT.*

Health workers were based in all YOTs within Staffordshire. ADSIS provided the substance misuse service across the YOS, with outreach programmes that could be accessed by children and young people in the more remote and rural areas. Engage provided the mental health support service across the county, as well as the link to CAMHS.

Strengths:

- ◇ Each YOT had adequate capacity to serve the health needs of the children and young people accessing the teams.
- ◇ Specialist assessments were undertaken within the target timescales.
- ◇ ADSIS provided a range of harm reduction and treatment services for children and young people who had offended.
- ◇ ADSIS received appropriate referrals from YOS workers and the service worked effectively with other health support staff within the YOS to discourage substance misuse. All YOS staff had been trained in screening for health needs, the success of which was reflected in the appropriateness of the referrals received.
- ◇ The access to CAMHS via Engage was generally satisfactory. The Engage team provided tier 2 and 3 CAMHS support to the YOS.
- ◇ Substance misuse family support workers had been appointed and were undertaking a range of work with parents/carers to address substance misuse of children and young people.
- ◇ The health workers contributed to the healthy living elements of the Addicted to Sport programme (e.g. a smoking cessation service), working closely with the other YOS staff involved in the programme.

Area for improvement:

- ◇ There were gaps in the service for 16-18 year olds' transition mental health services across the YOS.

**Good
practice**

The effective team working between the various groups of staff involved in the Addicted to Sport programme demonstrated a good holistic approach to intervention within the YOS.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Children and young people who have offended are safeguarded through the work of the YOT.*

A policy document existed that specified the processes for the protection of children and young people at risk of harm from themselves or from others. The child protection arrangements had been updated in April 2005 to clarify the changes resulting from the implementation of the Children Act 2004.

Strengths:

- ◇ There was good liaison between the YOS and social services for both Looked After Children and those cases in the inspection sample who were not categorised as Looked After Children.
- ◇ Appropriate action was taken in the majority of the cases in the inspection sample in which children or young people were considered vulnerable to harm from themselves or from others.
- ◇ Inter-agency information sharing protocols were available that clarified the way in which all partner agencies were expected to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. There were clear plans in place to update the protocols to reflect the implementation of the Children Act 2004.
- ◇ The ROLAC project provided early intervention for children and young people aged 10 to 17 who had offended or engaged in anti-social behaviour. The project provided a resource for the YOS to refer Looked After Children to a range of support services and resources to address issues related to their offending behaviour. Work was required to develop a more accurate method for evaluating the impact of the project.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Children and young people who have offended are enabled and encouraged to achieve their potential.*

The education manager and the education workers in each of the YOTs were seconded to the YOS from Education and Welfare. The ISSP team also included an education worker, with in-house educational provision as part of the programme.

Strengths:

- ◇ A protocol existed between the YOS and Staffordshire High School head teachers. The YOS's commitment to schools was clearly set out within the protocol, and in return the schools undertook to provide named teachers for liaison with the YOS and to assist with literacy and numeracy assessments.
- ◇ In 93% of the inspection cases that had difficulties in relation to education, in 86% there was clear evidence that action had been taken.
- ◇ A range of interventions had been developed in collaboration with local schools and employers (via Connexions). A mini jobs club had been established with the Youth Service, Connexions and employers in order to place young people in relevant employment and training. The partners used local networks to set up supportive work experience placements.
- ◇ A number of well-planned interventions took place at a local level using the skills of partner agencies. Much of the work was on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.
- ◇ Children and young people were encouraged to participate in alternative activities and to consider education and training opportunities. Part of the provision included 'taster' days on educational or training premises and support for interviews and completion of CVs.
- ◇ The YOS worked well with the local PRU and special schools to ensure that children and young people were given relevant support. The provision was flexible, and integration (with support) into education could be undertaken incrementally.
- ◇ Children and young people who had offended were usually provided with support tuition for reintegration and the YOS worked closely with the child's or young person's family and the education establishments to provide ongoing and effective support.
- ◇ The YOS achieved the target of 80% of children and young people engaged in ETE in the pre-16 cohort, and was almost on target with the post-16 cohort. 82% of the children and young people were in full-time education as compared to the JYB target of 90%.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Outcomes for children and young people are improved by their involvement through consultation about the services provided by the YOT.*

The YOS used the *What Do You Think?* form as standard practice to engage with the children and young people about the service provided to them.

Strengths:

- ◆ In 70% (26 out of 37) of the cases in the inspection sample, the child or young person had completed a *What Do You Think?* form.
- ◆ Eighty-three children and young people completed an interactive or paper questionnaire, or were interviewed face to face by the inspection team about the service provided to them by the YOS. This indicated a good level of engagement between the YOS staff and the children and young people.
- ◆ Staffordshire YOS obtained feedback from children and young people at the close of their contact about their experiences and satisfaction. Information leaflets for children and young people and their parents/carers were provided which explained the different types of orders and the programmes available within the YOS.

Good practice

Feedback from the children and young people at the time of the inspection indicated that the YOS:

- *"have been fair";*
- *"helped me in court; helped with my family; arranged appointments when I am not at school/work";*
- *"is keeping me out of trouble";*
- *"helps me".*

Other children and young people said:

- *"You can talk to them as friends and they are very helpful";*
- *"They always ask if you need help and always help with anything";*
- *They "explain everything clearly and in a sensible manner";*
- *They are "friendly, helpful and funny people".*

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Attention should be paid to diversity issues and developing the methods of engagement with black and minority ethnic children and young people, girls and young women, younger children, and children and young people with learning and mobility specific needs.

Good practice

The YOS routinely involved young people in the recruitment process for all jobs within the YOS. The young people were chosen to both chair and contribute to panels and they set their own questions for candidates. The feedback of all panel members was taken into consideration in scoring the candidates and in making recruitment decisions.

3.3

Work with parents/carers

Key judgement:

- ◆ *Parents/carers are supported in addressing their children's offending.*

A range of parenting interventions had been developed over the preceding year within the YOS which included individual programmes, interventions provided by other agencies, and group activities run by the YOS. Parenting workers worked within all three YOTs in Staffordshire. A parenting coordinator was in the process of being recruited at the time of the inspection.

Strengths:

- ◆ Excellent partnership working arrangements existed with other agencies to enable the YOS both to access and deliver parenting programmes effectively across the county.
- ◆ Parenting workers received referrals from the police and from YISP, as well as engaging parents/carers on a more voluntary and informal basis with the parenting programme within the YOS.
- ◆ Referrals were made to the parenting workers when initial Asset scores in Living Arrangements and Family Relationships sections indicated issues for the family. They then made telephone contact with the parents/carers to arrange a visit to undertake a parenting assessment. There was a high level of take-up amongst the parents/carers approached.
- ◆ A range of interventions had been available that used various methods – individual work, small groups or referral on to other agencies. These interventions varied across the YOTs.
- ◆ The assessments of parents/carers were individually tailored, in order to ensure appropriate attention to the diverse needs of each parent/carer.
- ◆ Written work or reading/homework was not promoted within the interventions, in order to ensure that parents/carers with limited literacy skills were not disadvantaged.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ There were some gaps in the provision of parenting interventions across the county and the waiting lists varied in lengths. It was positive that the parenting workers maintained contact with the parents/carers whilst they were waiting for an intervention, although it was felt unlikely to be sustainable as workloads increased.
- ◆ The coordination of parenting work delivered across the county required attention. The recruitment of the parenting coordinator would go some way to rectifying this shortfall. At the time of the

inspection, it was reported that parenting programmes were being run in areas of the county but were not widely known about. As a result, potential service users were being denied opportunities to attend programmes because they had missed the start date of the group or were unaware of its existence.

- ◊ Whilst there were procedures in place for monitoring the satisfaction of the parents/carers with the service received, there was no method of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the parenting work undertaken.
- ◊ Very few parenting orders were given across Staffordshire and it was not clear whether magistrates were aware of the range of interventions available for parents/carers across the county.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

This section is judged as adequate.

4.

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DTOs

Key judgement:

- ◇ *The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by assessment.*

Each YOT within Staffordshire YOS had practitioners who took a lead with DTO cases. Additionally, a YOT worker was employed by the YOS to work part-time within HM YOI Werrington, as well as to provide linkages with HM YOI Brinsford and HM YOI Stoke Heath.

Strengths:

- ◇ Initial Asset forms were completed both to the required standards and timescales for all the DTO cases examined as part of the inspection.
- ◇ The assessments, and any additional relevant information, were forwarded to the secure establishments within 24 hours of completion. Staff in the reception area at HM YOI Werrington confirmed that they always received the completed assessments with the children and young people when they arrived from court.
- ◇ The case manager contributed to all initial training plan meetings and ensured that the Asset assessment was utilised fully in the target setting process. Where the case manager was unavailable to attend the initial planning meeting, the specific link YOT worker attended on their behalf.
- ◇ Evidence from the DTO files examined during the inspection indicated that there were good links between the YOT workers and the secure establishments. The YOT workers worked proactively to address the health, education and training needs of the children and young people in custody.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by contact with the child or young person and effective liaison with the secure establishment during the custodial period.*

Strengths:

- ◇ Case managers contributed to sentence planning review meetings, or were represented by the YOT link worker if unavailable.
- ◇ Information sheets had been produced by the YOT link worker which gave important phone numbers, visiting times and general information about HM YOIs Werrington, Brinsford and Stoke Heath. These were given to parents/carers at court when the sentence was passed.
- ◇ Parents/carers of children and young people on DTOs were offered transport to any meetings at secure establishments if they were unable to get there independently. Sessional workers were employed by the YOS to 'escort' parents/carers to the meetings.
- ◇ In one case, the Fire Service had visited a YOI to carry out ten sessions of the Xtinguish programme with a young person. This work directly contributed to the young person's risk assessment for placement in suitable accommodation, due to his offence of arson.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ It was likely that the geographical placement of girls and young women at secure establishments outside Staffordshire caused difficulties in maintaining contact (although at the time of the inspection the number placed in secure accommodation outside of the county was very low).
- ◇ Although some mechanisms existed for developing and maintaining informal strategic links with Prison Governors and Secure Centre Managers (via attendance at the LCJB), these needed to be formalised to increase the consistency of joined up working with the YOS across the different secure sites.

Key judgement:

- ◇ *The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by reintegration into the community.*

Strengths:

- ◇ All eight DTO cases reviewed as part of the inspection sample had appropriately timed training plan reviews, both within the ten working days from the start of the order, and subsequently on a three-month basis or at the end of the order if sooner.
- ◇ The YOS's contact with the children and young people released from custody was consistent with the national standard in all eight cases reviewed.
- ◇ There was a good continuity of service provision in substance misuse work for those children and young people on DTOs. The same

substance misuse packages were used within and outside custody in order that children and young people were able to begin substance misuse work during custody and then continue the same programme of individual work with the ADSIS substance misuse workers employed within the YOTs.

- ◆ Staff at HM YOI Werrington had agreed a system with the YOS whereby if the child or young person appeared likely to reoffend after release from custody, the YOS worker called the YOI and its Personal Officer visited the child or young person in the community.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The YOS identified the need to develop risk management strategies for ensuring effective community reintegration of DTO cases.
- ◆ Improved links with Supporting People were required to more effectively meet the housing needs of children and young people.

Key judgement:

- ◆ *The YOT demonstrates positive outcomes in its work with children and young people subject to DTOs.*

Strengths:

- ◆ Of the five relevant DTO case files inspected, four showed improvement in overall Asset score from the initial score at the start of the DTO.
- ◆ None of the eight cases examined during the inspection were found to indicate that the children or young people had been convicted of any further offences since receiving the DTO.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ Feedback was not provided to the YOIs in Staffordshire in relation to the outcomes for children and young people completing custodial sentences within Staffordshire and returning to the community to be managed by the YOS.

Good practice

Use of the same intervention programmes as used by the YOS at one secure establishment meant that seamless continuation of intervention was possible on release from custody.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DTOS

This section is judged as good.

5.

VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Key judgement:

- ◇ *Victims of children and young people who have offended feel that they have been assisted by the intervention of the YOT in achieving closure.*

The police seconded to the YOS undertook the victim liaison role, and assisted with integration of the victims with restorative processes. Indirect reparation was facilitated by the Community Payback Team within the YOS.

Strengths:

- ◇ A Community Participation Coordinator was being recruited to the YOS who would take responsibility for reparation work.
- ◇ All assessments of the needs of both victims and the children and young people for restorative and reparative interventions were individualised, enabling attention to be paid to any diversity issues.
- ◇ The direct community reparation work commenced within the first three months of the order in all five cases in the inspection sample, which included community reparation work.
- ◇ Case managers worked with the families of the children and young people to establish the appropriateness of restorative interventions.
- ◇ In order to expand the range and location of reparation projects, the reparation team was working hard to forge links with appropriate agencies and partners across Staffordshire.
- ◇ The reparation team had been planning to expand the way reparation work was undertaken to include the families of the children and young people in the processes, and to link up with the parenting work being undertaken within the YOTs.
- ◇ The health and safety of the children and young people undertaking reparation work across the county was carefully assessed and tightly managed in the arrangement of placements and partnerships. The success of this process was reflected in the low rate of accidents and injury. Feedback received from victims during the inspection indicated a high level of satisfaction with the intervention of the YOS.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ Despite the police within the YOS contacting all victims via letter to inform them of the services available, there was very little take-up by victims. There was no clear understanding of the reasons for this.

- ◇ There was very limited evidence in the case files inspected that the victims had been appropriately consulted about reparation or restorative justice work with the children and young people who offended against them.
- ◇ The reparation team worked hard to attempt to link the reparation activities with the offences committed by the children and young people, in order to make them more relevant. This was not always possible due to the numbers and locations of projects available. Some of the cases in the inspection sample had been waiting significant periods to undertake reparation work.
- ◇ Victims were rarely present at referral panels.
- ◇ There was a lack of awareness of staff in the YOS, who were not responsible for victim liaison activities, as to what the procedures were and what occurred in work with victims.

Good practice

The BUSTED project involved children and young people who had committed burglaries designing posters advising residents of local communities about things burglars looked for when deciding which properties to target. The posters provided advice about what could be done to reduce the likelihood that local residents would be burgled. These posters were displayed on local buses and therefore received a high level of exposure to members of the local community.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This section is judged as adequate.

The joint inspection of YOTs

The joint inspection of YOTs is an independent programme, funded by the Home Office and reporting to the Secretary of State. Inspections are conducted jointly, involving CSCI, Estyn, the Healthcare Commission, the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, HMIC, HMI Prisons, HMI Probation, Ofsted and SSIW as appropriate. The joint inspection team is located within and led by HMI Probation.

Home Office objectives

The joint inspection contributes primarily to the achievement of Home Office Objective II – 'more offenders are caught, punished and stop offending and victims are better supported', and to the requirement to ensure that custodial and community sentences are more effective at stopping offending.

It also contributes to the achievement of Objective III, through the scrutiny of work to address drug and other substance misuse, and to other relevant criminal justice system and Children's Services' objectives in England and Extending Entitlement objectives in Wales.

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.

Inspection arrangements

- ◇ The joint YOT inspection is conducted in line with the Government's commitment to proportionate and coordinated inspection in local government. It:
 - is proportionate to risk, with fieldwork adapted to the circumstances of the YOT and only carried out to identify findings or to disseminate good practice
 - complements, and is coordinated with, other inspection programmes, including the JARs in England, and inspections undertaken as part of the WPI and of youth support services in Wales
 - informs judgements made in the APA and CPA in England.
- ◇ The criteria for the third phase of the inspection focus on:
 - management and partnership arrangements
 - work in the courts
 - work with children and young people in the community
 - work with children and young people subject to DTOs
 - victims and restorative justice.
- ◇ Prior to the inspection, each YOT is asked to submit selected advance information and complete a self-assessment, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- ◇ In England, fieldwork for each individual inspection takes place over one week, prior to the JAR. It consists of:
 - an assessment of a representative sample of individual case files
 - meetings with relevant managers, representatives of partner organisations and members of the YOT staff
 - contact with children and young people, their parents/carers and the victims of offences committed by children and young people supervised by the YOT.
- ◇ Fieldwork in Wales includes the same elements but is linked to inspections undertaken as part of the WPI and of youth support services. The assessment of case files may, therefore, be conducted in advance of the meetings with managers and staff. However, the total amount of inspection time spent within the YOT remains the same as in England.
- ◇ The assessment of case files consists of a representative sample of between 30 and 80 children and young people (dependent on the YOT's workload) who have been subject to some form of intervention in the previous months. The cases cover most orders, including licences and are examined in detail. The case manager and any other person significantly involved in delivering the intervention are interviewed as part of the file reading exercise and, where possible, the child or young person themselves and their parents/carers.

- ◆ 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, as a representative accompanying the inspection team, for the fieldwork week. We consider this to be a positive way of developing mutual understanding and strengthening the links between inspection and practice.
- ◆ The inspection findings will be compiled in a report which includes 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 is submitted to the Home Secretary, as the Secretary of State responsible for youth justice, with simultaneous copies to the Education and Health Secretaries. In Wales, reports are also submitted to the Ministers for Social Care and Regeneration, Lifelong Learning, Health and Social Care as well as the Minister for Children.
- ◆ Reports on YOTs in Wales are published in both Welsh and English. We also aim to fulfil our other responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act 1993 in accordance with the central principle of equality embodied in the Act.
- ◆ A copy is sent to the YJB. Copies are also made available to the press and placed on the website of HMI Probation at:
<http://www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

Code of practice

Each inspection will:

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

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

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

Scoring approach

The scoring approach has been significantly changed in phase three of the inspection programme to ensure compatibility with that of the JAR and Corporate Assessment in England, and the similar judgements used in inspections undertaken as part of the WPI and of youth support services in Wales.

In phase three, each of the five sections of the inspection are individually assessed against the relevant criteria. Assessments are based on:

- ◇ information supplied by the YOT
- ◇ interviews with chief officers, managers and staff both from the YOT and other partner organisations
- ◇ examination of case files
- ◇ discussions with case managers and other people significantly involved in the supervisory process
- ◇ the perspectives of the children and young people, their parents/carers and, where possible, their victims, contacted during the course of the inspection
- ◇ information supplied by the JAR, Corporate Assessment and other relevant inspection findings in England and inspections as part of the WPI and of youth support services in Wales.

The judgements and their descriptors are given in the table below:

Judgement	Descriptor
4	Excellent – performs strongly, well above minimum requirements with outstanding features
3	Good – performs well, consistently above minimum requirements with no important shortcomings
2	Adequate – only meets minimum requirements
1	Inadequate – does not deliver minimum requirements, with many important shortcomings

We summarise the judgements of the five sections in an overall assessment. We have decided that in phase three we will not give a general categorisation of the performance as a whole, as we wish each YOT to focus attention on its own specific areas for improvement.

Next steps

- ◇ The YOT will be asked to send a response to the recommendations, to the lead inspector, together with an action plan within three months of the publication of the report. It is anticipated that the recommendations will normally be addressed within 12 months of publication to allow sufficient time for integration within existing developments.
- ◇ Once the action plan has been agreed by the lead inspector, it will be passed to the YJB who will monitor the recommendations' implementation.
- ◇ 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 Staffordshire YOS has not revealed any such concerns.
- ◇ In addition to the reports on individual YOTs, the joint inspection team also publishes periodic reports on findings across a number of teams. Such reports include comments on race equality and diversity issues and other trend information. They also include comparisons between the performance of YOTs with similar characteristics.

Inspection criteria for YOTs in England

1. Management

1.1: Leadership

Key judgement

1.1.1: The Management Board provides strategic oversight and direction, and coordinates the provision of youth justice services by the YOT and partner organisations.

Evidence

- 1.1.1.1 There is a clear line of accountability for the YOT to the local authority Chief Executive and YOT plans are integrated with those of the wider council.
 - 1.1.1.2 The Management Board is made up of representatives of partner organisations who attend and participate actively in meetings.
 - 1.1.1.3 Members of the Management Board represent the needs of the YOT to their parent organisations.
 - 1.1.1.4 The Management Board gives support and guidance to the YOT Manager to ensure that they engage with local and national priorities and promote race equality and wider diversity issues.
 - 1.1.1.5 The Management Board ensures that the Youth Justice Plan is implemented.
 - 1.1.1.6 The Management Board ensures the provision of accurate and timely data returns, both for its own use and that of the YJB.
 - 1.1.1.7 Partners regularly and collectively review, monitor and evaluate service information to ensure that the YOT is contributing to improving outcomes for children and young people.
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1.2 Partnership and resources

Key judgement

1.2.1: Partner organisations and the YOT work together to deter children and young people from offending.

Evidence

- 1.2.1.1 The Youth Justice Plan reflects partner strategies.
 - 1.2.1.2 Resources have been identified and capacity exists to meet assessed need.
 - 1.2.1.3 YOTs are appropriately staffed by partners according to legislation and Home Office/YJB guidance.
 - 1.2.1.4 Protocols, contracts and SLAs have been agreed between the YOT, its statutory partners and other relevant organisations to address the coordination of work, delivery of services, information sharing, human resources and funding arrangements. They are regularly reviewed and updated.
 - 1.2.1.5 The YOT is a member of the ACPC/Local Children's Safeguarding Board, and operates according to local child protection procedures.
 - 1.2.1.6 The YOT contributes to a joint-agency approach to the management of high-risk offenders in the community, including MAPPA and registration with the police.
 - 1.2.1.7 There are secure arrangements for the recording and sharing of information on children and young people at risk, including those moving across service boundaries.
 - 1.2.1.8 A range of interventions and services, including health and education, are provided across the authority to meet the needs of children and young people who have offended and those at risk of offending.
 - 1.2.1.9 The YOT contributes to community regeneration initiatives that are targeted at the most needy areas and address the broad range of family needs in an integrated way.
 - 1.2.1.10 The YOT contributes to successful outcomes in reducing anti-social behaviour, in particular through effective partnership working.
-

1.3 Staff supervision, development and training

Key judgement

1.3.1: Positive outcomes for children and young people are enhanced by effective staff.

Evidence

- 1.3.1.1 Practice is defined by written policies and procedures.
 - 1.3.1.2 Staff are regularly supervised within a performance management framework, in accordance with their developmental needs and assessed level of competence.
 - 1.3.1.3 Annual appraisals contain objectives that are linked to local and national targets.
 - 1.3.1.4 All staff are appropriately qualified and provided with training opportunities to equip them to meet the requirements of the Youth Justice Plan to identify and manage risks and to raise safeguarding concerns.
 - 1.3.1.5 Training needs are regularly reviewed.
 - 1.3.1.6 Volunteers are appropriately trained and are available for YOT activities.
 - 1.3.1.7 CRB checks are undertaken on all staff and volunteers who have access to children and young people or their case files, and are updated at least every three years.
 - 1.3.1.8 Joint agreements are in place for the management of disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures.
 - 1.3.1.9 There is a written complaints procedure, which is well publicised and easily accessible. Complaints are properly managed against the procedure.
 - 1.3.1.10 Health and safety assessments of facilities and activities are undertaken, acted on and updated regularly.
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2. Work in the courts

Key judgement

2.1: Good working relationships exist between the YOT and the local court.

Evidence

- 2.1.1 An agreement is in place between the YOT, justices' clerk or his/her nominated senior lawyer and the local Crown Court covering arrangements for court services.
 - 2.1.2 The YOT provides trained and knowledgeable staff to ensure adequate representation in any courts within its geographical area, including Saturday/bank holiday cover and the Crown Courts.
 - 2.1.3 The YOT attends and contributes to a Youth Court User Group, which meets regularly and whose purpose is detailed in the national standard.
 - 2.1.4 The YOT provides regular inputs to magistrates' court and Crown Court staff about a range of programmes and sentencing options.
-

Key judgement

2.2: Effective practice with children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT within the courts.

Evidence

- 2.2.1 Information and first appointments are provided to all children and young people who are made the subject of community sentences or bail supervision and support programmes.
 - 2.2.2 All children and young people remanded or sentenced to secure or custodial detention are interviewed, assessed for vulnerability, and the information is passed to the establishment within the national standard timescale.
-

Key judgement

2.3: Children and young people are safeguarded and the likelihood of their further offending reduced by the provision of appropriate services, including bail supervision and support programmes.

Evidence

- 2.3.1 Arrangements are in place between the YOT and the appropriate local Children Service's Department regarding the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984), remands from Saturday/bank holiday courts and the completion of the appropriate paperwork for children and young people remanded to the care of the local authority.
 - 2.3.2 There are arrangements in place, to which the YOT has agreed, to identify and alert the YOT of all children and young people who are at risk of secure or custodial remand.
 - 2.3.3 Differentiated support/supervision services are offered, commensurate with likelihood of remand, to address objections to bail.
 - 2.3.4 Follow-up services are provided to securely remanded children and young people to ensure that, where appropriate, further bail applications are made and accompanied by commensurate support packages.
-

Key judgement

2.4: Courts are assisted in making informed decisions by the provision of good quality reports from the YOT.

Evidence

- 2.4.1 PSRs are produced in accordance with the relevant national standards, of a good quality, to time and in the agreed format.
 - 2.4.2 PSRs are impartial, free from discriminatory language and stereotypes.
 - 2.4.3 Proposals are appropriate and commensurate.
 - 2.4.4 A copy of the PSR is provided to the child or young person and their parents/carers, where appropriate, and in good time.
 - 2.4.5 SSRs and stand-down reports are available and assist the court in timely decision-making.
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3. Work with children and young people in the community

3.1: Work with children and young people at risk of offending

Key judgement

3.1.1: Children and young people are prevented from offending.

Evidence

- 3.1.1.1 The YOT contributes to the provision of services in the local authority to divert children and young people from offending.
 - 3.1.1.2 A process has been agreed by the YOT and its partners to identify and assess children and young people at risk of offending.
 - 3.1.1.3 Assessments are sensitive to cultural difference and diversity, and linked to criminogenic needs.
 - 3.1.1.4 Interventions are inclusive and address the specific needs of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
 - 3.1.1.5 Attention is given to safeguarding children and young people.
 - 3.1.1.6 Interventions demonstrate effectiveness in reducing offending and promoting positive outcomes.
 - 3.1.1.7 There is a reduction in the number of children and young people who are first-time entrants into the criminal justice system.
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3.2: Work with children and young people who have offended

Key judgement

3.2.1: Children and young people who have offended are prevented from reoffending.

Evidence

- 3.2.1.1 An Asset form is fully completed at the beginning of all interventions and reviewed as appropriate. It is informed by contact with social services and the self-assessment, and takes account of cultural difference, diversity and safeguarding issues.
- 3.2.1.2 Risk of harm to others is fully assessed in all cases identified as posing a potential risk, through the initial Asset form or alternative accepted tool.
- 3.2.1.3 Supervision plans are written in accordance with national standards, with a victim restorative process, emanate from Asset and contain SMART objectives.
- 3.2.1.4 Interventions address offending behaviour, are targeted in areas of assessed need and are evaluated and consistent with the principles of effective practice.
- 3.2.1.5 Interventions are inclusive and address the specific needs of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
- 3.2.1.6 Contact with children and young people is consistent with national standards and Home Office/YJB guidance.
- 3.2.1.7 Enforcement activity follows non-compliance within the national standard timescale.
- 3.2.1.8 Action is taken to challenge and reduce discrimination and harassment by children and young people.
- 3.2.1.9 Examination of the case file provides evidence of progress.
- 3.2.1.10 The YOT demonstrates a reduction in offending in the pre-court, first tier and community bands of penalties.
- 3.2.1.11 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, show improvements in behaviour, attitude and family relationships.

Key judgement

3.2.2: The health of children and young people who have offended is promoted by the work of the YOT.

Evidence

- 3.2.2.1 Staff working with children and young people are advised and supported in identifying possible physical and mental health problems and in making appropriate referrals.
 - 3.2.2.2 Specialist assessments are undertaken on those with health needs.
 - 3.2.2.3 Children and young people who have offended are discouraged from substance misuse.
 - 3.2.2.4 Children and young people with health problems are supported in accessing services that address their assessed needs.
 - 3.2.2.5 Examination of the case file shows evidence of improved health outcomes.
 - 3.2.2.6 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, suggest an improvement in physical and mental health.
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Key judgement

3.2.3: Children and young people who have offended are safeguarded through the work of the YOT.

Evidence

- 3.2.3.1 Risk of harm, either to self or to/from others (vulnerability), is fully assessed in all cases.
 - 3.2.3.2 The YOT refers cases where safeguarding concerns have been identified, to the local Children's Services and contributes to child protection plans on a case-by-case basis.
 - 3.2.3.3 Threshold criteria for making and responding to safeguarding referrals are clear and widely understood by staff from both the YOT and Children's Services.
 - 3.2.3.4 Interventions take account of safeguarding children and young people.
 - 3.2.3.5 There is evidence of joint working and the sharing of information and plans with the allocated social worker, particularly in the cases of Looked After Children.
 - 3.2.3.6 Looked After Children who have offended receive specific guidance and support.
 - 3.2.3.7 The YOT contributes to the reviews of Looked After Children who have offended.
 - 3.2.3.8 Examination of the case file reveals a reduction of risk factors.
 - 3.2.3.9 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, show a reduction in vulnerability.
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Key judgement

3.2.4: Children and young people who have offended are enabled and encouraged to achieve their potential.

Evidence

- 3.2.4.1 Specialist assessments are undertaken on those with specific educational needs.
 - 3.2.4.2 Interventions promote attainment and are targeted in areas of assessed educational need.
 - 3.2.4.3 Support is given to children and young people who have offended and their parents/carers, to promote good behaviour, attendance at school and educational attainment.
 - 3.2.4.4 Action is taken to ensure that children and young people who have been permanently excluded from school attend alternative settings aimed at securing reintegration into mainstream education.
 - 3.2.4.5 Children and young people who have offended are supported in securing further education, training or employment.
 - 3.2.4.6 Examination of the case file provides evidence of improved achievement and/or attainment.
 - 3.2.4.7 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, show improved achievement and/or attainment.
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Key judgement

3.2.5: Outcomes for children and young people are improved by their involvement through consultation about the services provided by the YOT.

Evidence

- 3.2.5.1 The YOT involves children and young people in consultations about the services they receive.
 - 3.2.5.2 Proactive measures are taken to ensure that children and young people in minority groups, younger children and those with communication problems are able to give their views.
 - 3.2.5.3 Consultation with children and young people makes a significant difference to the quality of service provision.
 - 3.2.5.4 Staff give effective feedback on action following consultation, or on issues raised by individual children and young people, including reasons for not acting on particular issues.
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3.3: Work with parents/carers

Key judgement

3.3.1: Parents/carers are supported in addressing their children's offending.

Evidence

- 3.3.1.1 Assessments of parenting skills are carried out in a timely manner, in accordance with YJB effective practice guidelines and are used to inform interventions.
 - 3.3.1.2 Parents/carers are made aware of the requirements of the interventions and are kept informed about progress during the course of the intervention.
 - 3.3.1.3 Parents/carers are referred to interventions that are sensitive to the diverse needs of parents/carers from a range of cultural backgrounds and are available on a voluntary and statutory basis.
 - 3.3.1.4 Parents/carers are supported in addressing their children's behaviour.
 - 3.3.1.5 Interventions promote effective parenting in relation to the parents'/carers' ability to care, control and safeguard the child or young person.
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4. Work with children and young people subject to DTOs

Key judgement

4.1: The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by assessment.

Evidence

- 4.1.1 An initial Asset form is completed that takes account of cultural difference, diversity, health, education, safeguarding and family issues, and forwarded immediately to the secure establishment.
 - 4.1.2 Specific risk factors (e.g. risk of harm, either to self or to/from others, health or substance misuse) are assessed and communicated to the secure establishment immediately.
 - 4.1.3 The YOT worker forwards copies of all relevant assessments, including care plans, PSRs, previous convictions, health and educational plans, to the secure establishment within 24 hours of the court appearance.
 - 4.1.4 The YOT worker contributes to the initial training plan and ensures that it is informed by Asset.
 - 4.1.5 The YOT works proactively with the secure establishment to ensure that the child's or young person's educational, training and health needs are assessed and addressed.
 - 4.1.6 Action is taken to identify and address the specific needs of Looked After, or otherwise vulnerable children and young people, girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
 - 4.1.7 The child's or young person's housing needs on release are assessed and action taken, where relevant, to prevent the loss of existing accommodation or to secure new settled arrangements.
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Key judgement

- 4.2: The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by contact with the child or young person and effective liaison with the secure establishment during the custodial period.

Evidence

- 4.2.1 The YOT communicates regularly with key people in secure establishments.
 - 4.2.2 The YOT worker contributes effectively to sentence planning and review meetings and to reviews of the training plan.
 - 4.2.3 The YOT facilitates contact with all service providers who are relevant to the needs of the child or young person and the risk they present.
 - 4.2.4 Arrangements to meet the child's or young person's assessed needs, particularly in relation to health, education and accommodation, are established in preparation for their release.
 - 4.2.5 Provision is made to address the specific needs of Looked After or otherwise vulnerable children, girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those who are disabled.
 - 4.2.6 The YOT worker contributes actively to the final review meeting, in accordance with the national standard.
 - 4.2.7 Parents/carers are encouraged to attend sentence planning and review meetings, in particular, the final review meeting.
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Key judgement

- 4.3: The likelihood of reoffending for children and young people who receive DTOs is minimised through the intervention of the YOT by reintegration into the community.

Evidence

- 4.3.1 The training plan is reviewed within ten working days and subsequently on a three-month basis or at the end of the order, whichever is soonest.
 - 4.3.2 The YOT worker assesses and monitors the child's or young person's housing needs.
 - 4.3.3 The YOT worker monitors the provision of health and education services, and the Management Board is informed where these services are not provided, in accordance with the national standard.
 - 4.3.4 The child's or young person's individual learning plan continues following release and is regularly reviewed, updated and shared with relevant providers and organisations, particularly Connexions.
 - 4.3.5 Interventions commenced in custody to address offending behaviour, health, safeguarding and education are continued on release, where appropriate.
 - 4.3.6 Interventions are inclusive and address the specific needs of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
 - 4.3.7 YOT contact with children and young people released from custody is consistent with the national standard and Home Office/YJB guidance.
 - 4.3.8 Enforcement activity follows non-compliance within the national standard timescale.
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Key judgement

- 4.4: The YOT demonstrates positive outcomes in its work with children and young people subject to DTOs.

Evidence

- 4.4.1 Examination of the case file provides evidence of progress, demonstrated, for example, by attitude to offending, improved family relationships, health outcomes, educational attainment and reduced vulnerability.
 - 4.4.2 The YOT demonstrates a reduction in reoffending for the custody band of penalties.
 - 4.4.3 Indicative accounts of outcomes from children and young people, parents/carers and other relevant persons asked, show improvements in behaviour and attitude.
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5. Victims and restorative justice

Key judgement

5.1: Victims of children and young people who have offended feel that they have been assisted by the intervention of the YOT in achieving closure.

Evidence

- 5.1.1 Assessments of victims' needs are consistently carried out in a timely manner, in accordance with effective practice guidelines.
 - 5.1.2 All victims are given the opportunity to make informed decisions about their involvement in direct/indirect restorative processes with children and young people who have offended and are supported in doing so.
 - 5.1.3 Communications are undertaken in a sensitive manner, responsive to individual needs, circumstances, preference and diversity.
 - 5.1.4 Victims are offered the opportunity to influence any reparative element of the child's or young person's supervision plan and to be informed of their progress.
 - 5.1.5 Victims have access to a restorative intervention tailored to their needs.
 - 5.1.6 Restorative and reparative interventions are provided that are appropriate to the age, vulnerability, culture, ethnicity, language needs, literacy levels and gender of the victims and children and young people who have offended.
 - 5.1.7 All victims are offered the opportunity to give feedback that is used to inform the work of the YOT.
 - 5.1.8 Children and young people involved in restorative interventions make a positive contribution to the victim and community.
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