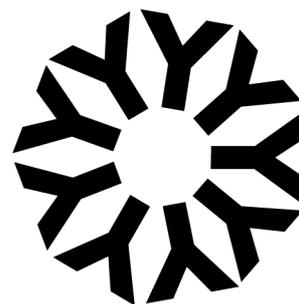


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Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:
Coventry
Youth Offending Service

2005

Foreword

The Coventry Youth Offending Service was the first to be inspected in the second phase of the inspection programme. We were pleased to find a service that was well integrated into the delivery of multi-agency community safety and children's services in the area. The management team was highly regarded by partner organisations and had been influential in developing the contribution of the Youth Offending Service to a broad range of collaborative projects, geared towards reducing crime and safeguarding children.

We found positive working relationships with many partner agencies, that enhanced the quality of the delivery of services. Initial assessments were generally completed to a good standard and there was evidence of appropriate specialist contributions. Interventions were in place to address the individual risks and needs. However, more attention should be given to managing risk and enforcement issues, and the quality of supervision planning and reviews also required improvement. The Youth Offending Service did not have a systematic approach for gathering and using information on the outcomes of its work with children and young people.

Our overall assessment of the Coventry Youth Offending Service's performance was that it provided a good basis for its future development and the service should continue to progress well. This report contains a number of recommendations which are aimed at improving its quality and impact.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

December 2004

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in 2004.

- ◆ The file reading took place week commencing 30 August.
- ◆ The second week commenced on 27 September.

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<i>Lead Inspector</i>	<i>Joseph Simpson HM Inspectorate of Probation</i>
<i>Inspectors</i>	<i>Maddie Blackburn Healthcare Commission, Rhona Bradley Commission for Social Care Inspection, Steve Glass HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Kam Kaur HM Inspectorate of Probation, Yvette King Commission for Social Care Inspection, Phillip Whittaker Office for Standards in Education.</i>
<i>Practice Assessors</i>	<i>Suki Binning, Penny Davies, Stephanie Mason</i>
<i>Support Staff</i>	<i>Natalie Dewsnap, Grace Dickin, Rachel Dwyer</i>
<i>Programme Manager</i>	<i>Liz Calderbank HM Inspectorate of Probation</i>
<i>Area Assessors</i>	<i>Georgina Kell, Tony Kirby</i>

Glossary

ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour Order
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CADDY	Crime, Alcohol, Drugs & Disaffected Youth
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CCSP	Coventry Community Safety Partnership
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
DTO	Detention and Training Order
EPQA	Effective Practice Quality Assurance
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
HMIC	HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMI Prisons	HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	HM Inspectorate of Probation
HR	Human Resources
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
IT	Information Technology
LEA	Local Education Authority
National Standards	National Standards for Youth Justice Services
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PAYP	Positive Activities for Young People
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PR	Public Relations
PSR	Pre-sentence Report
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded
SSIW	Social Services Inspectorate for Wales
VLO	Victim Liaison Officer
YIP	Youth Inclusion Programme
YISP	Youth Inclusion and Support Panels
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YOMP	Young Offender Management Programme
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YOT	Youth Offending Team

Introduction

The joint YOT inspection programme commenced in September 2003 and is the first full inspection to examine the work of YOTs, established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The programme is being implemented in three phases, the first of which was completed in July 2004 and focused on establishing benchmarks for the later phases of the inspection.

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

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

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

Key findings

Management and partnership arrangements

- ◆ The YOS was located in an impressive framework for integrated multi-agency work, developed under the local strategic planning arrangements.
- ◆ The Management Board was well established and focused on problem-solving activities.
- ◆ Representation from the appropriate partner agencies was good.
- ◆ The Head of Service and his senior managers had promoted the role of the YOS in the local Crime and Disorder and Children's Services agendas.
- ◆ A development process would help to consolidate the strengths in the management team.
- ◆ Staff were supervised but not currently appraised, although plans were in place to introduce an appraisal system from early 2005.

Work with children and young people and their parents/carers

- ◆ A broad portfolio of resources and facilities had been established to improve the quality of services to children and young people.
- ◆ There were many examples of innovative work by the YOS, leading to an identifiable improvement in the criminogenic factors for children and young people. However, the YOS did not have a systematic approach to capturing and making use of such information.
- ◆ The quality of the initial Assets were good, but the reviews did not routinely show the progress made by children and young people.
- ◆ Initial supervision plans and reviews needed to be improved.
- ◆ Risk of harm assessments were not undertaken on all relevant cases.
- ◆ Enforcement procedures were not consistently implemented.
- ◆ Case/line manager decisions on risk and national standards issues were not always annotated in the case file.
- ◆ Many practitioners felt that the information sharing protocols limited communication between agencies.
- ◆ A development plan had recently been implemented to improve diversity awareness and practice within the YOS.

Victims and restorative justice

- ◆ There were high levels of satisfaction recorded by victims in respect of the services they received from the YOS.
- ◆ Improvements in the exchange of victim information between the courts, the CPS and the police could assist with the prompt commencement of victim contact work.
- ◆ Victim awareness issues were included in many of the programmes offered by the YOS in the supervision of children and young people.
- ◆ Several examples of innovative joint agency approaches to reparation work were noted.

Overall assessment

The overall performance of the Coventry YOS provided a **good basis for its future development**. We were particularly impressed by the way the YOS had been integrated into a broad range of services, delivered through multi-agency partnership arrangements. The management team had been assertive in developing the contribution of the organisation to the community, the children and young people, their parents/carers and victims.

Assessment activities were generally good, but more attention needed to be given to the quality of reviews of assessments and reviews of supervision plans. Risk management arrangements should be improved, as should some aspects of enforcement practice. Interventions were generally consistent with the profile of risks and needs identified for children and young people, and were supported by a wide range of programmes and partnership services, many of which contained a victim awareness emphasis. Further work was required to extend the services available for a wider range of victims and this issue was being addressed by the YOS.

We were, in general, impressed by the work of the Coventry YOS and would hope that the recommendations in this report will further enhance its work.

Recommendations

The Chair of the Management Board should ensure that:

- ◇ an action plan is devised to address the following recommendations and forwarded to the lead inspector within three months of the publication of this report
- ◇ routine reports on the outcomes of the YOS's work with children and young people are received and used to inform developments in service delivery
- ◇ the operation of information sharing protocols meets the required needs of the agencies involved and protects the interests of children and young people served by the joint working arrangements.

The Head of Service should ensure that:

- ◇ an appraisal process is implemented within the YOS
- ◇ the quality of Asset reviews, initial supervision plans and their reviews is improved to meet the requirements of national standards and assist case managers in planning and reviewing work with children and young people
- ◇ risk of harm assessments are completed on all relevant cases and management decisions in respect of risk concern and risk aware cases are routinely recorded on the case files
- ◇ enforcement procedures are consistently applied:
 - communication between operational staff from partner organisations and YOS case managers facilitates early responses to non-compliance by children and young people
 - line manager and case manager decisions in respect of national standard compliance issues are routinely recorded on case files
- ◇ a management development programme is established for managers within the YOS.

The West Midlands Police should ensure that:

- ◇ in conjunction with the Head of Service, the arrangements for deploying police officers within the YOS are assessed with a view to ensuring consistency in their roles and that the YOS fully benefits from their contribution.

Overview

- ◆ Coventry is a city located in the West Midlands of England. The total population measured in the Census 2001 was 300,848, 23.8% of whom were aged 0-17 years. This figure was slightly higher than the average for England and Wales of 22.7%.
- ◆ 84% of the population of Coventry was white. This figure was much lower than the average for England, which was 90.9%. There was a higher percentage of Asian or Asian British residents (11.3%) than the average for England (4.6%). The same was true of the percentage of the Black or Black British residents (1.8%), which was lower than the English average (2.1%).
- ◆ The level of employment in Coventry was lower than the average for England and Wales, 55.4% and 60.6% respectively. The level of unemployment was at 4.0%, which was higher than the average for England and Wales (3.4%). As Coventry was a university city there were more students (12.4%), both economically active and inactive, living in the area, than on average across England and Wales (7.3%).
- ◆ Coventry Council was classified as fair in the Audit Commission's CPA. It scored three for core service and two for council ability.
- ◆ The YJB summary of YOT performance against the key performance indicators for 2003/2004 ranked Coventry in 38th position.

1.

MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

1.1

Leadership

Inspection criteria

The Management Board:

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

The Chief Executive of the local authority took an active interest in the work and development of the YOS, particularly in its contribution to a multi-agency approach to delivering services in Coventry. The YOS was located within the CCSP, which set an ambitious scope of activity for the service, both internally and in collaboration with other service providers in the area. These arrangements underpinned the ability of the YOS to contribute, in a coordinated way, to the delivery of services to the people of Coventry and impacted on both its strategic planning and operation, and that of a wide range of organisations from the statutory, voluntary and private sector. The integration of those agendas and YJB priorities were addressed by the YOS Management Board through the planning arrangements.

The Head of Service and his line manager, the Head of Children's Services, were both members of the CCSP group. The Head of Service was seen by many to have been instrumental in mapping the role and contribution of the YOS to the local Crime and Disorder and Children's Services agendas. YOS senior managers were represented on a wide array of local multi-agency strategic and operational forums. We saw a highly productive framework of inter-agency relationships in action which assisted in planning future provision and managing existing services. These arrangements were facilitated by senior echelons in the local authority, the police and the PCT, with the other agencies participating as appropriate. Many managers operating in the area commented positively upon the healthy multi-agency environment that existed in Coventry.

The Management Board was a well-established group, chaired by the Director of Social Services and Housing, in which all partner agencies were actively involved. The focus of the Management Board had changed over time to become a problem-solving forum and a number of examples were provided. Several newer members had recently been introduced and the range of organisations and their representation on the Board was consistent with the strategic aspirations of the service.

The Head of Service attended Board meetings, took direction on priorities for the YOS and enjoyed support, both formal and informal, from his line manager and the other Board members. The Youth Justice Plan update 2004/2005 was 'signed off' by all relevant Chief Officers indicating their ownership and approval of the plan. Whilst addressing the YJB requirements of the YOS, the plan firmly rooted its work into a complex and far reaching framework of service delivery, orchestrated by the CCSP. The Board received routine reports against YJB performance targets and satisfied itself, through a set of internal processes, that the returns were timely and accurate.

A core business group was in existence. This had initially focused on YJB performance issues but, more recently, had broadened its remit to advance quality issues identified by the most recent EPQA. The group met on a monthly basis to review progress against key performance measures and effective practice issues. Corrective action was formulated and implemented, and information from the monthly meetings circulated to staff through the local IT system. Although information on some key outcomes was collected, e.g. impact on reoffending rates for children and young people on the PAYP project, it tended to be used for accountability or marketing purposes, rather than keeping staff informed of the results of their work or developing further services to children and young people. The YOS was not, therefore, in a position to report systematically on the progress made by the children and young people under its supervision. Similarly, it did not have a culture of routine analysis of the experience of minority ethnic service users or other groups with special diversity requirements.

Strengths:

- ◆ A strong and committed Management Board, operating in an environment which supported the developing work of the YOS within a broader community safety framework.
- ◆ The managers within the YOS took a prominent role in a range of multi-agency strategic and operational forums.
- ◆ Well established, proactive, culture of multi-agency work, supported and encouraged by relevant Chief Officers in the area.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Information on key outcomes on the progress of children and young people under YOS supervision was not routinely used to inform practice.
- ◆ Diversity issues, focusing particularly on the experiences of those from disadvantaged groups, were not regularly reported on.

1.2 Partnership and resources

Inspection criteria

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

In general, we found the YOS to be staffed appropriately by partners according to legislation and Home Office guidance. Protocols had been agreed between the YOS, its statutory partners and other organisations. These addressed relevant HR and funding arrangements.

The Youth Justice Plan update 2004/2005 put partnership issues at the core of the strategy for developing and delivering services offered by the YOS. There were many examples of productive, innovative and jointly delivered interventions. The inspection team met with representatives of a number of partner organisations on several occasions. They invariably expressed positive views about their experience of joint working which, they felt, enabled both sides to meet the specific objectives of their particular agency.

A range of contracts, SLAs and other agreements, supported by monitoring arrangements, were in place with partners to manage joint services. There was appropriate variation in the accountability arrangements and the differences reflected the variety of organisations involved and the nature of the partnerships. However, managers within the YOS commented upon the learning process they had undergone in developing these agreements. There were plans to consolidate their approach to such tasks, but some specialist support for the managers involved could prove beneficial.

Education provision was considered to be a high priority across the service and was structured to respond to *Every Child Matters* and EPQA recommendations. One of the most significant educational developments had been the restructuring and expansion, at a strategic and operational level, of the YOS education team, which had been led by an Operational Manager at second tier level. The team now comprised of 15 staff, including project staff, mentoring and basic skills workers, a parenting officer, several YIP staff, two Connexions personal advisors, two young people's support officers and the PAYP coordinator. In addition a Children and Young Persons Activity Coordinator post, paid for by the Children's Fund, had been created.

There were a number of well developed partnerships involving the Education Welfare Service, Education Psychology Service, Youth Service, Connexions and the Lifelong Learning & Skills Council, who provided joint funding for an Effective Parenting Programme for the families of YOS clients. The Head of Service played a key role in the Children and Young Person's Strategic Partnership. Other protocols, including information sharing and working with 'tagged' children and young people, provided clarification for YOS staff and partners. There were good links established with allied themes and initiatives such as the Children's Fund, the Behaviour Improvement Plan and the Local Preventative Strategy.

The LEA was making a considerable investment in supporting the YOS through core funding and secondments from the youth service, and was seeking to reduce school exclusions by introducing a new agreement with head teachers. Exclusion rates in Coventry were reported to be below the national average. Children and young people not in school, but not permanently excluded were tracked effectively by the Education Welfare Service and referred to the YOS where appropriate. The establishment of Education Behaviour Clusters was being considered as a multi-agency response to reducing exclusions, involving the schools, the YOS, Learning Support Unit's, the youth service and the Children's Fund as well as other parts of the LEA service. The YOS had played a key role in this development which necessitated the realignment of the youth service and reprioritisation of its resources. It was anticipated that the YOS education team would make a major contribution to success in this area of work by providing additional education provision for children and young people, concentrating on behaviour modification programmes, reparation, literacy and numeracy and family support.

Similarly well developed partnership arrangements existed with the PCT and there had been a recent doubling of resources by the PCT to support work with children and young people in relation to physical, sexual and mental health issues.

At the time of the inspection, the different tasks undertaken by the three officers from the West Midlands Police Force, who each serviced separate intelligence units, varied considerably. For example, one officer fed information back to a strategic tasking group, whereas another was required, from time-to-time, to work on local mainstream policing duties. There was agreement that the officers would deal with final warnings and

the Community Safety Bureau asked them to service intelligence gathering and sharing. This, somewhat rigid, framework, however, meant that they were kept apart from a broad range of YOS activities, where their involvement could have enhanced the services on offer.

It was apparent that the West Midlands Police Force and the YOS had, as yet, to reach a common understanding of the role of officers seconded to the YOS. This issue needed to be resolved to ensure that it did not adversely impact on the proposed restructuring of the service. We were pleased to note that a Youth Issues Officer, from West Midland Police Headquarters, had recently started work on the production of a clear strategy for this aspect of police work, although some concern was expressed over the extent of consultation with local command units on this agenda.

None of the YOS managers sat within the tasking and coordination functions of the Police Intelligence Departments. The Police National Intelligence Model could, therefore, be missing a significant section of intelligence. We were encouraged by the appointment of a CDRP Partnership Analyst who would work closely with the YOS Information Officer.

The YOS worked in close partnership with the local attendance centre. A recent inspection of the centre noted that the working relationship between the Coventry YOS and the Coventry Junior Mixed Attendance Centre would be 'the envy of other centres'. This inspection also found evidence of a productive relationship that promoted a constructive and purposeful approach to the provision of services to children and young people, whilst enhancing the efficiency of joint work between the two organisations.

The YOS had developed a systematic approach to establishing positive relationships with the local media and its work regularly featured in local newspapers. These contacts were used to promote new initiatives and keep the public informed of the work of the YOS. Recognition of the quality of this aspect of their work came through winning the YJB Press Award in 2003. We were impressed by the work of the YOS on this agenda and would suggest the work could be further enhanced through clarifying the remit and objectives for these activities, integrating them into the business plan for the unit and establishing a budget to support the work.

Strengths:

- ◆ Positive relationships, established over a long period of time, existed with a large number of partner organisations.
- ◆ The scope and depth of partnership arrangements, which focused on service delivery and action, were substantial.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ The formulation of partnership agreements needed to be reviewed to ensure a consistent approach to these tasks, based on existing best practice.
- ◆ Integration of the press and PR activities into the business planning of the unit.
- ◆ The potential contribution of the YOS to police and multi-agency intelligence-led crime reduction and public protection initiatives had still to be realised.

1.3 Staff supervision, development and training

Inspection criteria

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

An appropriate range of HR policies existed within the YOS which were readily available to staff in a number of different ways. The YOS had developed a 'quick start' guide so that staff could familiarise themselves with relevant policies and procedures. Staff were supervised monthly, with more frequent sessions for new staff. Supervision tended to focus on accountability issues, service delivery and individual development. Each followed a structured format and records of the discussions were kept. Risk and diversity issues were routinely discussed.

A Training and Development Officer was in post and staff development needs were fed back to that member of staff from line managers. Training agendas were then established. One example of a unit-wide training programme launched through these arrangements was the all-staff diversity training programme. This took place in 2004 and led to a development plan for improving diversity awareness and practice within the YOS. This agenda was ongoing at the time of the inspection.

The lack of a tailored training framework for new managers within the YOS was an issue of concern for managers and there was disappointment that the earlier training provided by the YJB was not still available. Although staff commented generally that they were encouraged to access training opportunities, the YOS had experienced difficulties in locating relevant events. Several local sources had been tried in the past but were felt to be unsatisfactory by those who had attended from the YOS.

With the exception of some seconded staff, there was no appraisal process in use in the YOS, and the majority of staff in the service did not operate to annual objectives. This significantly limited the ability of managers to operate a cyclical process of staff accountability and development. The YOS was required to introduce the local authority appraisal process from January 2005. Managers within the YOS saw this as a positive development and keenly awaited the roll out of these arrangements.

The YOS was served by the corporate local authority HR department which routinely carried out several personnel activities. One example was the initial and routine CRB checks for all staff employed in the YOS. The policy framework barred the deployment of any worker from the YOS, paid and voluntary staff included, from starting work until confirmation of the CRB check had been received. Protocols were in place with seconding bodies to manage the HR issues relevant to secondees. Whilst the YOS benefited from designated corporate HR support, key senior members of YOS staff also took lead responsibility for many aspects of the HR function. This regularly included, for example, the preparation of job descriptions and person specifications for new posts, convening and sitting on interview panels, coordination of subsequent paperwork and feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

The YOS recognised the need to reconsider the deployment of staff and had been involved in a service review for some time. Plans were in hand for a reorganisation, including management arrangements, and these changes were geared towards improving the quality of service delivery to children and young people by targeting resources on the basis of risk and needs.

Strengths:

- ◆ The corporate HR department ensured a systematic approach to both initial and review CRB checks.
- ◆ A development plan for improving diversity awareness and practice within the YOS had been developed following training.
- ◆ The recent service review had improvements in the quality of service delivery as a key driver.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Training for managers, in the context of a management development process, was needed to consolidate the strength of the management team.
- ◆ Implementation of a staff appraisal process would assist in managing the contribution of staff to the work of the YOS.

Good practice

The management team had established a process for managing the development, implementation and review of policies within the YOS. This included an IT resource to make policies readily available to all staff. Each policy had a nominated manager who had responsibility for its development and a review schedule ensured the Management Board had the opportunity to routinely assess the utility of the range of agreed policies in the organisation.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

This section is judged as satisfactorily met.

2. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS/CARERS

2.1 Assessment

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

Inspection criteria

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

The Local Strategic Partnership within Coventry had prevention as one of its key priorities. This work was being led by the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership who oversaw the implementation of the local Prevention Strategy and Identification, Referral and Tracking initiatives. Each of these arrangements had dedicated management resources and were supported by a number of additional processes. Prevention also featured as part of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy Programme Delivery Group. There was a broad based partnership approach to this agenda, located within the context of *Every Child Matters*. The Head of the Service was represented on all of these groups.

Specific developments that impacted upon the YOS included joint work with Coventry Youth Service, and Children and Families Education Service. This work was linked to developments in the local Schools Intervention Project and focused primarily on school disengagement, disaffection and youth crime. The project targeted ten schools where education staff were asked to generate a list of children and young people who, it was believed, would benefit from preventative work. The local police also fed similar information into the YOS on children and young people at risk of offending. YOS staff would then decide on methods of contacting the children and young people, either directly, via the police or education staff or via a series of after-school activity-based events in the local community.

The YOS staff were to adopt the YJB ONSET assessment tool to support assessment activities with children and young people at risk of offending. Future plans saw YISP coordinating the preventative strategy and integrating mainstream and Children's Fund activities, thus facilitating early identification of risk issues and prompt access to services. Information sharing on a multi-agency basis involved a 'top 50' group, in which multi-agency perspectives on a number of children and young people, who could benefit from targeted service delivery, were shared and actioned.

Strengths:

- ◆ Preventative work was a key priority and was overseen at Chief Officer level.
- ◆ The work of the agencies and organisations involved in preventative work was well coordinated.
- ◆ Reporting systems had been put in place in place to monitor progress against objectives.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFFENDED

Inspection criteria

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

Assessments were routinely completed at the start of supervision with approximately 80% of Assets completed on time and to an adequate standard in the files examined. Only 7% were found to be poor in respect of quality. Although risk of harm to self was routinely assessed, we were concerned to note that a full assessment of risk of harm to others was not satisfactorily completed in a significant number of relevant cases. Furthermore, the line manager had not made an entry on the case file to indicate they had considered the issues in the case in almost half of those identified as 'risk concern' or 'risk aware'. Similarly, there was little indication from files of the line manager's involvement in reviews of risk issues, although the case might well have been discussed in supervision with the case manager.

The positive approach to joint work within the YOS set the context in which specialist assessments by health, education and drug workers were seen as an integral part of work with individual cases. There were generally good working relationships and good communication between the range of staff involved in assessment activities.

Two health specialists, dealing with generic health issues and focusing on mental health issues, were located in the YOS. They carried their own caseloads of relevant cases and offered consultation to other YOS staff at the PSR stage. In future, health workers were to provide psychiatric reports to courts and discussions were underway with the Director of the Medical Health Team on the appropriateness of these developments and any

potential implementation issues. Although court reports were being considered at the time of the inspection, the grades and functions of both health specialists could usefully be reexamined. Health specialists did not complete Assets, but offered advice to YOS staff in relevant cases.

Good practice

The YOS was well served by a regular assessment service offered by CAMHS. Joint assessments with CAMHS workers and YOS staff took place on a weekly basis in the One Stop Shop centre. The CAMHS worker had access to a psychiatrist for advice on cases and working relationships between staff were positive.

Effective use was made of the Asset software system to assess children and young people's educational needs and refer to the education team. There was a good system of information sharing and recording between the caseworkers and the education workers.

Initial supervision plans were produced to an adequate standard and within the national standards timescales in 74% of cases. We identified inconsistencies in the approach of staff to producing these plans, many of which did not have wholly SMART objectives. This made the review of progress against the objectives set for the child or young people difficult to assess. Reviews of supervision plans were found to be satisfactory in 75% of cases sampled. We found that in 89% of plans there was a close fit between the interventions identified and the assessed level of risk of harm in the case.

Identification of appropriate resources featured in the majority of cases. The YOS was supported by a broad range of resources, both in-house and through partnership arrangements, with case managers selecting those best suited to the supervision of the individual child or young person.

Strengths:

- ◆ Initial assessments were generally completed well.
- ◆ There was a positive approach to multi-agency assessment.
- ◆ A number of different resources were routinely used in the supervision of children and young people.
- ◆ The interventions identified and the intensity of supervision matched the assessed level of risk of harm posed by the child or young person.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Line management involvement in risk of harm assessments and reviews was not recorded in case files.
- ◆ The quality of objective setting in initial and review supervision plans needed improvement.

PARENTS/CARERS

Inspection criteria

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

At the time of the inspection, the needs of parents/carers were assessed at the PSR stage and commented upon in the report. Parental access to relevant services was therefore dependent on PSR authors' skill in identifying their needs. The file read showed that 87% of parents/carers were assessed as in need of further intervention.

The future approach to work with parents/carers was set in the context of a far reaching and innovative strategy involving a number of organisations. The YOS was in the process of setting up procedures to support this work. This would include training for front-line staff. Systems were being designed to ensure that the needs were assessed of all parents/carers of children and young people subject to supervision by the YOS. Parental access to services, geared at addressing their needs, would be possible throughout the period of contact with the child or young person. A further full time worker, based within the YOS, was to be appointed to service one-to-one work with parents/carers. The Orders Group, a sub-group of the CCSP, monitored progress on this agenda.

Strengths:

- ◇ There was a strong multi-agency framework and broad-based strategy in place to address the needs of parents/carers.
- ◇ A realignment of the management and staff resources to accompany this agenda had been undertaken.

2.2

Interventions

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF OFFENDING

Inspection criteria

- ◇ *There are arrangements in place to provide interventions for those children and young people who are assessed as at risk of offending.*
- ◇ *Interventions with children and young people who have offended are targeted in areas of assessed need, such as education, health and parental relationships, etc.*
- ◇ *Interventions with children and young people who have offended are specific to the needs of girls and young women, children and young people from minority ethnic groups, those with disabilities and take account of safeguarding issues.*

The YIP focused on provision of quality interventions and some notable success were recorded, e.g. a 40% reduction in arrests in a specific target area, assisted by the PAYP project and the Children's Fund.

Preventative interventions often involved the YOS targeting a particular group or locality and offering activity-based services to children and young people. An example of this was the Twilight Football League, where, working in partnership with ex-professional footballers, the YOS would arrange football matches and coaching sessions. Similar arrangements were in place jointly with the YMCA. Once contact was established with the child or young person, and they were engaged through leisure activities, the YOS staff would assess their needs and encourage participation in other relevant aspects of service delivery.

In addition to ongoing service provision, the YOS had a history of introducing innovative, special projects, normally in partnership with a range of other agencies and interested parties, such as Vibes and Street Impact.

The YOS had produced a wide range of information leaflets to describe and explain a number of their activities, including information on the various types of orders and other frameworks of contact with children and young people. These were readily accessible to service users.

Strengths:

- ◇ There was a culture of innovation in the YOS and many examples of well planned and implemented special projects were in evidence.
- ◇ Information on the various activities available was easily accessible.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFFENDED

Inspection criteria

- ◆ *Supervision plans are written in accordance with national standards, emanate from Asset and contain SMART objectives.*
- ◆ *Interventions are structured, evaluated and consistent with the principles of effective practice.*
- ◆ *Frequency of appointments for children and young people who have offended is consistent with national standards and Home Office/YJB guidance for final warnings, referral orders, community penalties, DTOs (custody and post-custody) and ISSPs (where they exist).*
- ◆ *For those children and young people who have offended, enforcement follows non-compliance.*

A broad range of interventions was available to case managers which reflected the key criminogenic factors appropriate to the majority of children and young people. The in-house resources were complimented by a variety of services available through partnership arrangements. These included a number of one-to-one and group work programmes, addressing offence-related needs. Case managers reported general satisfaction with the systems for accessing specialist resources and the speed of making such services available to children and young people.

The West Midlands Police had adopted the new YJB guidelines in respect of final warnings, and children and young people were initially bailed for assessment. However, it was not always apparent when the police were considering a final warning, and YOS staff had occasionally to contact the arresting officer to clarify the position. This led to delays in making initial contact with the child or young person for the purpose of assessment.

Good practice

The inspection team were pleased to note that Coventry YOS adopted a minimum standard approach to final warnings, by which officers completed an initial Asset assessments and then offered an additional contact involving a victim empathy session. This approach had resulted in a good take-up rate.

A range of programmes were in operation and each had specific aims and criteria for inclusion. The list of programmes was extensive and some examples included:

- ◆ Activ8 – aimed at use of leisure and personal skills issues
- ◆ Creepers – a burglary project focusing on victim-impact issues
- ◆ Cannabis – a drugs project
- ◆ D'facin - a criminal damage programme with an emphasis on victim impact

- ◆ Disarm – with police officers focusing on firearms and weapons offences
- ◆ Sticks & Stones – violent offences group focusing on victim issues
- ◆ Stop Arson About – fire service intervention for fire starters.

The majority of programmes had a victim aspect to their delivery. The YOS was particularly successful in seeking accreditation routes for a number of its programmes.

Good practice

A number of innovative projects had been established to support children and young people on orders. The Brakes project was a good example where they could, over a three month period, develop skills in motor vehicle maintenance and road safety, whilst also concentrating on anger management and raising self-esteem.

The ISSP was clearly structured and operated from well-equipped separate premises. Information flows between the ISSP and the YOS were good. However, the ISSP did not contribute to supervision plans and recorded their work with the child or young person on a separate system.

The YOMP had been in operation for several months. It focused on prolific young offenders who did not meet the ISSP criteria and its development had been informed by lessons gained from the operation of ISSP. One member of staff delivered the programme, which included elements of offending behaviour, activities, victim awareness, reparation and education, with family involvement being seen as an important feature of its operation. It involved an enhanced level of contact with targeted children and young people. The existing arrangements for the integration of these activities into the YOS framework were currently under review. We welcomed this, as the member of staff involved in this work appeared somewhat isolated.

Overall, partner agencies were satisfied with the way their work was integrated into the ongoing supervision of children and young people subject to orders and licences and with the communication and joint planning arrangements with case managers. Case managers were positive about the arrangements for communicating with colleagues in cases where there were multiple interventions. The majority of service providers had access to the electronic case log and could directly enter information on the attendance and participation of children and young people in the sessions they ran. Follow up of non-compliance issues was dependant upon the case manager routinely checking the entries made by others.

In general, case managers worked well with their colleagues across the YOS. However, certain aspects of the work of the drugs and alcohol service providers were felt to be less satisfactory by several practitioners in the YOS. CADDY workers were part funded by the YOS, but employed by Swanswell Charitable Trust who operated a strict confidentiality agreement in relation to work with children and young people. Whilst managers regarded the information sharing protocol as adequate, many practitioners

felt that, in practice, its use limited the information flow between the agencies. The case managers interviewed found this approach problematic in their assessment and work with children and young people and pointed to the possible compromise of safeguarding arrangements.

Contact levels planned with children and young people were found to be satisfactory in 90% of cases sampled. However, in 19 of 50 (38%) cases, the child or young person failed to keep to the planned level of contact. Whilst the majority of instances of non-compliance brought an appropriate response from case managers, in 14 of 47 (31%) cases, this was not satisfactory. Home visits generally took place in accordance with national standards requirements, although 6 of 36 (17%) cases had no evidence of a home visit. Management oversight of compliance issues was not routinely recorded in case files, although it was apparent from discussion with staff that many of these decisions were taken in conjunction with their line manager.

Good practice

KS was 16 years old when he was made subject to a 12 month supervision order with a requirement of attendance at YOMP. This was for offences of violence and breach of a combination order. Previous offences included a number of assaults, witness interference, Public Order Act offences, failing to comply with community sentences and Bail Act offences. Whilst participating in the YOMP scheme he attended the Uniformed Services course at Henley College. He then began work on joining the Army. He had an excellent record of attendance at the mandatory YOMP offending behaviour and leisure sessions. No offences had been recorded against KS since November 2003. This was by far the longest offence free period he enjoyed since his first conviction.

An issue of note throughout the sampling exercise was the low incidence of recording of diversity issues in case records. This related both to assessment and intervention issues. There was no systematic approach to recording the assessment of diversity requirements, nor any subsequent action plan to address the perceived needs. These issues needed to be taken forward by the development plan recently implemented across the YOS.

Strengths:

- ◆ Case managers and children and young people were served by a wide range of interventions from the relevant services.
- ◆ Unit expectations of a minimum standard in respect of final warnings had seen a healthy take-up rate by children and young people.
- ◆ There was good communication between staff involved in individual cases. Relationships between staff from different professional backgrounds were generally respectful and cooperative.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ ISSP intervention planning and enforcement processes were not fully integrated into the broader case management activities in the YOS.
- ◆ Managers' decisions on national standards issues were not always recorded in case files.
- ◆ There was no system in place to alert case managers to non-compliance where the child or young person was attending a range of interventions.
- ◆ The information exchange protocols with partner agencies required review to ensure appropriate confidentiality in work with children and young people and, in particular, to prioritise child protection and public protection issues.
- ◆ Diversity issues were not fully addressed within case files.

Good practice

A case manager demonstrated good understanding of effective practice issues and links to case management activities in work with a young woman subject to a six months supervision order for an offence of assault. The case manager targeted the criminogenic factors identified via Asset. Interventions matched risk and needs issues and included; the Sticks & Stones programme, victim empathy sessions, a letter of apology to the victim, work on thinking and behaviour, anger management and alcohol misuse. The inspection team saw examples of excellent recording, with a clear analysis of offending issues and a victim focus throughout. The order was revoked for good progress and the Asset showed a reduction in risk factors. The young woman has not reoffended and continued with voluntary contact.

PARENTS/CARERS

Inspection criteria

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

Case managers involved parents/carers in ongoing work with children and young people. However, although we met with a number of parents/carers during the course of the inspection, who were very positive about the work of the YOS, our file read showed that work with parents/carers was undertaken in only 26% of the cases where a need was identified.

Under the auspices of the CCSP, the new approach to provision of services was soon to be implemented by which parents/carers could access a range of individual and group work programmes. The arrangements were geared to enable the YOS and its partner agencies to address the service delivery issues associated with ASBO legislation and would mean that parents/carers would access services on the basis of either voluntary contact, parenting contracts or parenting orders. Parents/carers could be referred through three sources: the YOS; those using the services of registered social landlords and those identified via education services. A common approach to assessing their needs and sharing access to services had been agreed and the supporting protocols and management structures were in place.

The YOS had recently appointed a full-time manager to oversee these developments as part of her role. The anticipated demand for the services was not quantified at the time of the inspection.

Strength:

- ◆ Arrangements were in place to extend the scope of work undertaken with parents/carers.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Work was undertaken with only a small proportion of the parents/carers.
- ◆ No model had, as yet, been identified for forecasting throughput to assist the YOS in its management of the new arrangements.

2.3

Outcomes

Inspection criterion

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

Offending behaviour

In 72% of cases, there was satisfactory evidence that children and young people had complied with the requirements of their orders/licences. Although the focus of the work reflected the risks and needs profile identified through Asset, patterns emerged for some aspects of service delivery, where the level of work did not correspond to the volume of identified need. Further analysis of this issue could usefully be undertaken by the YOS.

The inspection considered evidence of children and young people making progress on criminogenic factors. Whilst many of the cases considered had only been supervised for a relatively short period of time, in discussion with case managers, we found positive and identifiable progress by children and young people. Some areas, where children and young people were identified as having made particular improvement, included:

- ◆ 23% of children and young people with an identified educational need
- ◆ 51% of children and young people with an identified thinking and behaviour need
- ◆ 26% of children and young people with an identified attitude to offending need.

There were several examples of information on reconviction rates being gathered and used, e.g. impact on arrest rates of PAYP project. Routine re-scoring of Asset would provide one route to monitor outcomes against criminogenic factors for children and young people. However, we noted during the inspection that many of the Asset assessments had identical scores at the time of the review as at the outset, despite the fact that progress had clearly been made against the criminogenic factors in the case. Some staff admitted that they did not routinely re-score Asset, but

merely brought forward the original score to the review document. Work on this issue with staff would enable the YOS to be better informed about the impact of interventions with children and young people.

Good practice

Street Impact was an eight-week multimedia, street crime and drugs programme which ran in 2003. Twelve children and young people took part, working with rap artists, graffiti artists, photographers, YOS and leisure and diversion workers. They produced an interactive CD ROM, which any child or young person can use by themselves, or with workers, to explore the consequences of involvement in anti-social behaviour, street crime of drug use.

The programme had an excellent engagement and completion rate, all twelve children and young people completed the course, and there was an overall attendance rate of 85% at all sessions.

In the six months prior to starting the programme, the participants were collectively responsible for 32 offences. During the period that the programme ran, they were convicted of three offences, and in the subsequent six months, of a further four offences. A year after completion of the project, seven of the twelve had not reoffended.

Education

Coventry YOS was providing a very good response to the educational issues facing children and young people involved with the youth justice system. It had recently made a number of significant improvements to work towards the overall target set by the YJB of 90% of children and young people supervised by the YOS to be in full-time ETE by the end of 2004. Reporting statistics presented to the YJB at the end of 2003, indicated that 73% of the children and young people completing their orders had an ETE placement. The most up-to-date figures provided for the inspection showed that the YOS was more successful with children and young people of compulsory school age, where over 77% were in an ETE placement, including 40.8% in full-time education at school.

The YOS' progress towards achieving the YJB target was not helped by delays at LEA level in processing the cases of excluded children and young people and the reluctance of some schools to accept them back or, on transfer, from other schools. As a result, some children and young people were without an effective education placement for an unacceptable period. Individual cases were discussed every two weeks at a Pupil Monitoring Group, which included YOS representatives.

Health issues

Discussion with health service managers showed the focus on health issues to be on establishing the health services for children and young people, either directly as part of the YOS in-house resources or via partnership arrangements. No details of the outcomes of health interventions were available at the time of the inspection. However, the case enquiries that

took place during its course found that the majority of children and young people assessed as having a need for physical, emotional or mental health services were referred for an appropriate assessment. The condition of most of those taking up a service showed signs of stabilisation and a limited number of cases showed significant improvement.

Safeguarding

The Director of Social Services and Housing was the chair of the YOS Management Board. Staff in the YOS reported improvements in the working arrangements with colleagues in both of those local authority departments. Whilst many wished to see even quicker progress on the arrangements that framed joint work around vulnerable children and young people, it was acknowledged that steady progress was underway. The YOS operated the local authority policy and procedures framework in respect of vulnerable children and young people. This included the use of a common referral form with Social Services. YOS managers commented upon the improved interface with local authority services in addressing the needs of vulnerable children and young people, but noted there were occasional individual cases in which managers had to intervene to agree the best course of action in joint work between front-line staff.

Strengths:

- ◆ Evidence of progress against criminogenic factors by many children and young people.
- ◆ Strong emphasis on educational issues and well developed arrangements for assessing needs and delivering services on this agenda.
- ◆ A history of including reconviction data in project work within the YOS, which could usefully be extended to a broader perspective on the impact of the work of the service overall.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ Analysis of the gaps between the profile of the assessed criminogenic needs identified for children and young people and the frequency to which they featured in the interventions provided by the YOS.

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

This section is judged as satisfactorily met.

3.

VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

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

Inspection criteria

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

The YOS had a dedicated VLO who specialised in work with the victims of children and young people sentenced to referral orders, community penalties or custody. In addition, the police officers in the YOS addressed victim issues in appropriate cases where the child or young person had agreed to a final warning. Clear arrangements were in place to protect the identity of victims and a useful case checklist was deployed to assist staff in keeping track of service delivery and administrative issues in individual cases.

Victim issues were picked up in a systematic way post-sentence. PSR authors relied upon CPS information to assist with the consideration of the impact of the offence upon the victim. This was perhaps an opportunity lost as VLO assessments of victim issues could enhance the quality of PSRs and their utility to sentencers. The planned development of the service would see inclusion of victims' issues, as assessed by the VLO, at the PSR stage.

The VLO had a range of well-established systems in place for contacting victims upon sentence of the children and young people by the courts. Occasionally delays in receiving victim information from the police hindered efforts to make prompt contact with victims. The lack of dedicated YOS staff at the Crown Court also added to delays.

All victims were sent a letter inviting them to contact the YOS through one of two routes. The first was an 'opt in' arrangement where victims would be invited to reply to the YOS and arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time. This approach was used for the victims of those children and young people subject to community penalties or custody. The second route involved an 'opt out' system where victims of children and young people subject to a referral order were given an appointment when the VLO would visit at them home. Anecdotal evidence suggested the take-up rate for services was significantly higher for those offered a definite appointment. This finding is supported by the experience of the probation service in contacting victims.

Work had also been undertaken with a number of corporate victims. These mainly centred on shops, supermarkets and local schools.

Contact with victims was based on a routine, but sensitive assessment of their needs and was used to plan appropriate interventions. It provided them with necessary information about the criminal justice process, and gave them the opportunity to make informed decisions about their involvement in their particular case and the offer of support whilst doing so.

Strengths:

- ◆ All victims were contacted.
- ◆ Victims' issues routinely featured in referral order and final warning activities.

Area for improvement:

- ◆ Information exchanges between the courts, the CPS, the police and the YOS did not enable prompt commencement of victim work.

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

Inspection criteria

- ◆ *Victims have access to a restorative intervention tailored to their needs.*
- ◆ *Victims are offered the opportunity to specify any reparative element of the child's or young person's supervision plan and to be informed of their progress.*
- ◆ *Restorative and reparative interventions are provided that are appropriate to the age, vulnerability, culture, ethnicity, language needs, literacy levels and gender of the victims and children and young people who have offended.*

At the time of the inspection, interventions with victims were at an early stage and focused mainly on referral orders. However, plans were, in place under the restructure for the YOS to adopt a broadened approach to victim work. YJB funding was to be provided for an extended ISSP which would involve a higher level of victim work.

Referral orders were mainly handled by two staff. In addition, the three police officers held a smaller number of cases. Each child or young person would routinely receive a three-stage approach to the contract. This would include a victim empathy session, community payback arrangements and a one-to-one session with a trained volunteer. Twelve volunteers were trained to provide some engagement with the child or young person post-contract. Victim statements and letters of apology were a routine feature of

the referral panels. Panels were held at the YOS office in the city centre or the ISSP premises, and steps were underway to also use local police stations as venues.

We were pleased to note that the YOS conducted home visits to victims in referral orders cases, and the visits were prioritised on the basis of assessed need. Staff reported a recent introduction of a system where panel dates were scheduled in advance, to enable panels to meet within the national standard timescale. However, there was evidence of limited victim involvement and attendance at panels. The inspection found that 81% of initial panels did not meet national standards timescales. We were informed of work in hand to improve this position.

In relation to final warnings, the YOS was able to regularly make contact with victims by telephone. All final warning interventions included a victim empathy package.

Staff had access to Headways, a head injury charity that provided services to children and young people involved in assaults, and there was adequate victim support liaison in the locality.

We found few indications of routine attempts to customise referral order services on the basis of diversity issues, for children and young people and victims. Several examples of responding to diversity needs were seen, particularly in respect of girls and young women. Never the less, the culture in relation to this area of work was for staff to offer a standard package of service delivery.

Strength:

- ◆ Innovative use of volunteers, with appropriate training for the role, in enhancing the services offered by the referral order arrangements.

Areas for improvement:

- ◆ Revisiting the arrangements for deploying police officers within the unit to ensure consistency in their roles and that the unit fully benefits from their contribution.
- ◆ Interventions were not systematically reviewed and adjusted, where appropriate, to ensure that they were responsive to the needs of service users with particular diversity requirements.

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

Inspection criterion

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

The team demonstrated a good understanding of the principles of effective practice in relation to restorative justice. However, from the information available, it would appear that few victims took part in any restorative justice processes, e.g. participation on referral order panels and take up of direct reparation opportunities. We estimated that 80% of reparation work was indirect and 20% was direct.

During the inspection, we had contact with a number of victims. They were a varied group and the services offered reflected the impact of the offences on the victims. This indicated a sound approach to assessment and prioritisation. Responses were positive and many were complementary about the service they had received from the YOS.

The YOS routinely asked for feedback on its work from victims. For example, in the previous 12 months, 49 victims had expressed satisfaction with the services provided by the YOS and one had expressed dissatisfaction.

Strength:

- ◇ High satisfaction levels expressed by victims.

Areas for improvement:

- ◇ Increasing the take up, by victims, of opportunities to participate in restorative justice processes.
- ◇ Increasing the timeliness of initial referral panels.

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

Inspection criteria

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

Reparation work by children and young people was organised along traditional lines, e.g. clearing of public areas etc. However, the YOS had delivered a number of projects geared towards making positive contributions to victims and the wider community. One example was a land clearance project in conjunction with the fire service. In this project children and young people undertaking reparation work helped to clear up grassland areas that had been set ablaze.

Strength:

- ◆ Innovative partnership approaches to delivering interesting and purposeful restorative and reparative activities for children and young people.

Good practice

Operation Egyptian was a joint project between the YOS and the police in which children and young people undertaking reparation activities filled some 25,000 'goody' bags with information and other materials relating to crime prevention and community safety issues. The children and young people then delivered the bags to residents in a vulnerable areas around Coventry.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR WORK WITH VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This section is judged as partly met.

The joint inspection of YOTs

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

Home Office objectives

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

It also contributes to the achievement of Objective III, through our scrutiny of work to address drug and other substance misuse, and to other relevant CJS and Children's Services' objectives.

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

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

Code of practice

Each inspection will:

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

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

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

Inspection arrangements

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

- ◇ The standards and criteria developed for the first phase of the inspection have been slightly modified and focus on:
 - management and partnership arrangements
 - work with children and young people and their parents/carers
 - victims and restorative justice.
- ◇ The fieldwork for each individual inspection will take place over two weeks, about two to three weeks apart. The first week will consist of a file reading exercise for which the YOT will be asked to identify a random sample of between 30 and 80 children and young people (dependent on the workload) who have been subject to some form of intervention in the previous months. The cases will cover most orders, including licences.
- ◇ These case files will be examined in detail. In half the cases selected, we will also undertake in-depth interviews with the case manager, any other person significantly involved in delivering the intervention and, where possible, the child or young person themselves and their parents/carers. Where appropriate, we also hope to meet and hear from victims of crimes by children and young people supervised by the YOT.
- ◇ In order to encourage self-assessment and increase ownership of the inspection findings, we are inviting YOTs to second a member of their staff, usually an experienced practitioner, to the inspection team for the duration of the file reading week. We have found this to be a positive way of developing mutual understanding and strengthening the links between inspection and practice.
- ◇ As before, the second week of the inspection will involve meetings with the CEO, Management Board members, YOT Manager and staff. It will cover the management of the YOT, its performance and the contribution made by its partner organisations. Discussions will be informed by the findings of the examination of case files conducted in the first week of inspection.
- ◇ The inspection findings will be compiled in a report which will include recommendations for improvement. These recommendations will be designed to encourage the YOT in its work, to support good practice and to promote improvements.
- ◇ The report will be submitted to the Home Secretary, as the Secretary of State responsible for youth justice, with simultaneous copies to the Education and Health Secretaries, and where relevant, the Ministers for Education & Lifelong Learning, Finance, Local Government & Communities, and Health & Social Services in Wales. A copy will be sent to the YJB. Copies will also be made available to the press and placed on the website of HMI Probation at:

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

Scoring approach

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

The three sections of the inspection will be individually assessed against the relevant standards, using the supporting criteria. Judgements will be based on:

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

The judgements are defined as:

- ◆ **Fully met** – exceptional performance beyond the requirements of national standards and other relevant guidelines
- ◆ **Satisfactorily met** – a sufficient level of performance to assure the joint inspection team that the YOT is progressing satisfactorily
- ◆ **Partly met** – less than sufficient performance on the majority of items
- ◆ **Not met** – inadequate performance on most items.

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

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

The overall performance of the YOT will be assessed as:

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

Next steps

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