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# Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:  
Bradford and District  
Youth Offending Team

ISBN: 978-1-84099-133-8

2008

## Foreword

The inspection of Bradford and District YOT took place in the fourth phase of our YOT inspection programme and was undertaken in conjunction with the Enhanced Youth Inspection, the Joint Area Review of children's services and the Corporate Assessment. The findings also contributed to the latter two inspections.

We found an energetic and forward-looking organisation, with some innovative ideas which had been translated into practice. The Board was well managed and businesslike and appropriately supported by partner organisations.

There was evidence of strong leadership, but we found inconsistency in managerial control, and as a consequence also in practice, and this required improvement.

The YOT performed well in most areas of work. Attention was needed regarding planning and reviews, particularly for those children and young people in custody. That said, we were confident of the organisation's structure and ability as being perfectly capable of taking the whole organisation forward.

*Andrew Bridges*  
*HM Chief Inspector of Probation*

*May 2008*

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff from the YOT, members of the Management Board and partner organisations for their assistance in ensuring the smooth running of this inspection.

We would particularly like to express our gratitude to Paul O'Hara and Raj Madhas for their commitment to the inspection.

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## Glossary

ASBO	AntiSocial Behaviour Order
Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
Estyn	Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, training and education
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
ISSP	Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme
LoR	Likelihood of reoffending
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
Onset	YJB tool for assessing children and young people at risk of offending
PCEP	Professional Certificate of Effective Practice
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PPO	Prolific and other Priority Offender
PSR	Pre-sentence report
RoH	Risk of Harm
RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm
SEN	Special educational needs
SQUIFA	Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents (Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for YOT workers)
WPI	Wales Programme for Improvement
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YOT/S	Youth Offending Team/Service

## Summary

Criteria	Judgement
<b>Work in the courts</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Work with children and young people in the community</b>	
Work with children and young people at risk of offending	<b>3</b>
Work with children and young people who have offended	<b>3</b>
Work with parents/carers	<b>3</b>
Outcomes of work with children and young people in the community	<b>4</b>
<b>Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Victims and restorative justice</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Management and leadership</b>	<b>4</b>

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

### **Work in the courts**

- ◇ Safeguarding issues were well attended to and addressed by the specialist court staff.
- ◇ Court staff attended remand review meetings in the custodial or secure establishment in line with the national standard and took an active part in the process.
- ◇ Pre-sentence reports were judged to give proper attention to the health and substance misuse needs of children and young people.
- ◇ There were two cases of children and young people who were sentenced using a previous pre-sentence report. Whilst this practice was the subject of an agreement between the YOT and courts, there was some concern that it might mean that the information was not as up to date as it could be.
- ◇ Some pre-sentence reports needed to be more analytical, addressing the child or young person's motivation for offending in clearer detail.

### **Work with children and young people in the community**

- ◇ Despite there being a range of providers of preventative activities, all had signed up to a common agreement that was monitored by the YOT.
- ◇ Interventions were appropriately focused on reducing the likelihood of offending or antisocial behaviour and community reintegration.
- ◇ Review planning, for those children and young people considered at risk of offending, needed to be improved.
- ◇ In most cases there was evidence of an active and early assessment of potentially discriminatory or disadvantaging factors, and in every case where such factors were identified a plan had been put in place to minimise its impact.
- ◇ The YOT manager chaired a regular meeting to review all high or very high risk of harm cases. This ensured he was aware of these cases, and also brought consistency to the decision-making process around them.

### **Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences**

- ◇ Overall, the work undertaken with children or young people serving the custodial part of their sentences scored slightly less well than those in the community. This may have linked to some extent with difficulties of access and assumptions about risk of harm and risk of safeguarding whilst they were in a secure establishment.
- ◇ In three-quarters of the relevant cases there was evidence of contact between the YOT worker and parents/carers to encourage their involvement and attendance at planning meetings. This included practical support such as the offering of lifts to facilitate travel.

- ◇ There were four cases where we disagreed with the worker's view that a vulnerability action plan was not required. This was an area that would benefit from some clarification and guidance for staff.

### **Victims and restorative justice**

- ◇ Some of the reparation work undertaken consisted of significantly large projects in which children and young people needed to invest their time and effort, but to which they could subsequently return as members of the community. The YOT manager had instituted a practice when such a large-scale project was completed of having a plaque erected, indicating that the work had been done by the children and young people from the YOT. This was one of several examples of ways of projecting a positive image of children and young people in Bradford.
- ◇ Given the high number of victims who were contacted there was a disappointingly small proportion who were willing to participate in an active manner. The victim workers recognised that this was an area for attention and hoped to develop a methodology which would result in an increase in positive responses from victims.

### **Management and leadership**

- ◇ The Board had given substantial focus to diversity issues and received reports which included a race and ethnicity breakdown that allowed them to explore issues of difference as a matter of course. The YOT manager was linked to the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Race Issues Group on the topic of over-representation of black people in the criminal justice system.
- ◇ Members of the Board who were interviewed described the group as well chaired, businesslike and appropriately attended. They were clear that it was their role to challenge the YOT manager about performance issues, as well as to support and advise him about ways forward.
- ◇ There was some evidence of a degree of inconsistency in the approach taken by different team managers. The management team had used a variety of systems to identify and promote best practice from one team to another, but there was a need for this to be further developed and monitored.

## Recommendations

Changes are necessary to ensure that (*primary responsibility is indicated in brackets*):

- (1) the implications and detail of the comprehensive written agreement, dated September 2007, between the YOT and the children's services department are actively promoted to practice staff and managers to minimise disagreements as to who should take lead responsibility in any given set of circumstances (*Board*)
- (2) best practice is identified and disseminated across the various teams and functions of the YOT (*YOT manager*)
- (3) the appearance of letters of apology is appropriate and the content clear and convincing to the victim in all cases (*YOT manager*)
- (4) victim assessments are consistently recorded in a way that also enables some collation of issues to inform future developments (*YOT manager*)
- (5) intervention plans are more consistently and clearly written so that the intended outcome is obvious and measurable for review purposes (*YOT manager*)
- (6) work done with children and young people following release from custody is reviewed and guidance made available to staff so work begun in a custodial setting is built upon in the community thus maximising any benefits (*YOT manager*).

## Next steps

An improvement plan addressing the recommendations should be submitted to HM Inspectorate of Probation for approval four weeks after the publication of this inspection report. Once agreed, the plan will be forwarded to the Youth Justice Board to monitor its implementation.

## Service users' perspective

### Children and young people

Two hundred and forty children and young people completed a questionnaire for the inspection, of which 235 questionnaires were interactive on computer software. The remainder were completed on paper, either independently or during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ This was a significantly higher response rate than had been routinely experienced in other YOT inspections. It was the result, at least in part, of a specific promotion by the manager to staff to engage the children and young people in making their voices heard for this inspection.
- ◇ Clearly, across such a large sample, there was a mixed set of views. There was however, an impressively consistent positive view of the way that respondents felt they were treated by staff at the YOT. Other key messages included:
  - 79% of respondents felt that life had improved as a result of being involved with the YOT; 75% reported improvements around education or training and 71% considered that their health had improved.
- ◇ In response to the question '**Can you tell us more about what has got better?**' the following is a very small sample of the typically positive replies:
  - *"Helping with problems at school, e.g. getting me onto alternative education programmes (Dance Academy, Summer Arts Project). It's helped improve my physical fitness (going to the Dance Academy). It has helped me think things through more clearly and it has helped me take responsibility for myself and others"*
  - *"My health has been looked at and I have been encouraged to seek medical advice. My key worker at Key House Project is making sure I attend all appointments and is there as a support. I have had help finding me a place of my own and my YOT worker has referred me to a very good supported tenancy scheme so I can be closer to my dad"*
  - *"My tag time has worked out better for me, so I can go to the mosque on a night through the month of Ramadan"*
  - and most frequently: *"My relationship with my mum"*.

Five interviews were conducted with children and young people in custody.

- ◇ One of the five did not feel that his current YOT worker was particularly interested in him and did the minimum during the current sentence. However, in the past he had enjoyed positive relationships with other YOT workers and could recall some positive engagements and support from them.

- ◇ The other four were very positive about their workers and their work, particularly as far as contact with family and expectations after release were concerned.
- ◇ One young person had previously had help from the YOT to establish independent accommodation and was confident that it would be able to help him with this again on his release.

### Parents/carers

Six questionnaires were completed by parents/carers, either independently or during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ All respondents considered that they had been kept up to date by the YOT about their children's progress.
- ◇ One went so far as to comment "*brilliant service, no suggestions for improvement*".
- ◇ All but one respondent commented that their relationship with their child had improved as a result of their contact with the YOT.

### Victims

Ten questionnaires were completed by victims of offending by children and young people, either independently or during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ All of the respondents found their first contact with the YOT very positive and helpful.
- ◇ With the exception of one respondent, victims found that YOT staff listened to their concerns and took time to identify their needs and to explain the services that were available.
- ◇ "*Marvellous outcome for Jane.*" (Respondent's daughter who had been the target of sustained bullying within school situation which had persisted for four years. "*Jane - back to normal self.*" The mother praised the restorative justice system. She had clearly been very concerned about her daughter's welfare especially as there had been some self-harm as a result of the bullying. The two girls attend the same school so have contact but there is now some real resolution of the difficulties.)
- ◇ One person had received a letter of apology that they did not consider to be sincere, because of both its content and presentation.

## Sharing good practice

Below are examples of good practice we found in the YOT.

### Work in the courts

**General criterion:  
1.1 and 1.2**

Adam was 17 years old and had appeared in court charged with murder. When seen by the YOT staff he was very withdrawn, with his body language suggesting he was still in shock. He was also threatening to self-harm. These concerns were fully assessed using Asset, raised with the court staff, with the YJB and followed up by an alert to the establishment. YOT staff asked the establishment to open a suicide and self-harm document and for him to be carefully monitored. This was done and Adam was placed in the healthcare unit with continuous video monitoring. The worker attended the remand meeting to develop the plan to manage Adam's vulnerability and also facilitated his stepfather and social worker to attend. Adam was also referred to CAMHS and by the second remand meeting he was much more positive, had begun to gain weight and was receiving good reports from the staff. Overall, concerns for Adam had been correctly identified and well managed, resulting in his vulnerability being well protected.

### Work with children and young people at risk of offending

**General criterion:  
2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4**

The YOT worker supported an unemployed young woman to obtain a pre-ETE training placement through effective collaboration with the ETE provider. This collaboration was a result of personal networks, as the worker had worked for the provider and was therefore fully informed of the availability of training placements there.

**Work with children and young people who have offended**

**General criterion: 2.8**

Bradford and District YOT had been a lead agency along with others in the establishment of 'The Academy' an innovative, dance-based, intensive programme led by Dance United, a professional dance troupe. The Academy offered an intensive, contemporary dance-led education programme as part of ISSP. Children and young people were timetabled to attend the Academy as part of their supervision and failure to attend was enforceable. One recent graduate is now a full-time student on the Bradford College performance arts course and has not reoffended in the year since he began attending The Academy. The programme is a full-time intensive 12 week course at the end of which attendees perform their work to a mixed audience of family, friends and professionals. The Project is funded by the Arts Academy and the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts.

**Outcomes of work with children and young people in the community**

**General criterion: 2.10 and 2.11**

Outcomes for David were positive with him making identifiable progress in many areas of his life. To a large extent, this had been achieved by the case manager showing commitment in his engagement with David. This was well evidenced in the detailed recording in the contact log and by the enthusiastic way the case manager discussed the case. He had clearly developed a positive rapport not only with David but with the significant others who were supporting him, notably his mother and his instructor at the ETE Centre. There was substantial evidence of home visits and meetings at the training centre which enabled David to show his case manager his achievements. There was evidence of positive regard for David's strengths in the practical arena and an excellent 'What Do You Think?' form was completed on a laptop at the training centre.

**Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences**

**General criterion: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4**

Naomi was serving a custodial sentence for a serious first offence. Lesley her case manager recognised the risk of Naomi becoming more involved in offending and ensured a high amount of contact and detailed planning throughout the custodial part of the sentence. Being aware of the risks that might apply on release, Lesley made sure that Naomi was collected from the institution and brought straight to the YOT office, where a health check was undertaken. Lesley had arranged for a curfew and electronic tag condition, to strengthen further the licence. Reparation was put in place at a local charity shop and links to Connexions were established, which resulted in a place on a course at Bradford College. Towards the end of the licence period, Naomi was placed on the Clean Break programme for women, attending twice a week during those final weeks of supervision. Overall, this was a comprehensive and effectively managed order, which seemed to have resulted in returning Naomi to a crime free lifestyle.

**Management and leadership**

**General criterion: 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3**

The YOT manager was keen to challenge and change the generally negative image portrayed about children and young people. He developed a strategy of positively promoting their achievements, which included a presentation of reoffending figures based on those who had not reoffended, the installation of plaques at reparation project sites, which identified that the work had been done by children and young people from the YOT, and by holding presentation evenings to acknowledge the positive steps that children and young people had taken through their work with the YOT.

## 1. WORK IN THE COURTS

### **1.1 General criterion:**

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

#### **Strengths:**

- (1) Court staff checked prior to their designated court duty for any potential cases of children or young people at risk of secure or custodial remand, so that they could appropriately prepare for this possibility.
- (2) There were arrangements in place to interview children or young people in the cells following remands. Court staff were clear about the purpose of the interview and the essential information that needed to be passed on to the secure or custodial facility. This assessment included details of the child or young person's vulnerability.
- (3) Court staff attended the remand review meetings in the custodial or secure establishment in line with the national standard and there was evidence of them taking an active part in the process.
- (4) The YOT was assertive in pursuing a second bail support package at the next opportunity if the first application had been declined by the bench.
- (5) Two remand foster care beds were accessible to the YOT specifically to provide an alternative for the court when it was considering a child or young person for a secure or custodial remand.

### **1.2 General criterion:**

*Courts are assisted in making informed, timely and effective decisions by the provision of good quality reports and appropriate information from the YOT.*

#### **Strengths:**

- (1) There was a written agreement between the YOT and the court about the use of existing reports for sentencing on subsequent occasions.
- (2) The court was staffed by specialist officers who were all qualified and competent. The role included cover for weekends and bank holidays. This specialist team was held in high regard by other court officials, including the

Chair of the Bench, who reported excellent relationships with them and confidence in the work that they did and the guidance they offered to sentencers.

- (3) Of the relevant cases inspected, almost two-thirds had a court report written for the sentence. Of those, just under three-quarters had a community proposal and a little under half of these recommendations were followed by the court. Of the remainder, it was clear that a custodial sentence was likely and the author had appropriately addressed that probability in their proposal.
- (4) In all relevant cases there was appropriate liaison between the report author and the social worker. It was also clear that the information gathered was used effectively in the report.
- (5) Almost three-quarters of reports inspected addressed diversity issues sufficiently.
- (6) It was pleasing to note that the vast majority of PSRs differentiated appropriately between LoR and RoH to others.
- (7) Almost all of the reports clearly assessed the LoR.
- (8) The sentencers interviewed were positive about the quality of information provided to them and considered it to be timely and focused. They were happy with the quality of court reports and felt able to raise any issues with the YOT staff or their manager. Examples of issues being resolved were provided which supported the quality of the working relationship.
- (9) There was evidence of effective communication between the YOT and sentencers. The manager attended Youth Panels twice a year. User group meetings were well attended by the YOT, as well as it having regular meetings with the legal advisor. There were examples of sentencers visiting projects to develop their understanding of the demands of sentences.

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

- (1) Although there was a written agreement between the YOT and the court about the use of existing reports for sentencing on subsequent occasions, there was evidence that the timescales identified in the agreement were not always kept to.
- (2) We considered that a majority of reports contained insufficient information about victims' wishes and did not fully address the child or young person's maturity. Only half of the reports inspected contained a clear analysis of the offence as distinct from a description.
- (3) The paperwork for breaches was not always of an adequate quality that sometimes resulted in delays in breaches being resolved.

**Conclusion:** These criteria are assessed as **good**.

## **2. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY**

### **Work with children and young people at risk of offending**

#### **2.1 General criterion:**

*The YOT (or others on its behalf) undertakes appropriate activities to prevent children and young people from offending.*

Bradford and District YOT led the development of a complex range of crime prevention activities supplied by different providers. The inspection identified good senior management and ownership from partners and was particularly impressed that all organisations had signed a common agreement about their involvement with this area of work.

#### **Strengths:**

- (1) All but one of the prevention cases inspected had a clear referral which was linked to the stated criteria of the scheme. The great majority of referrals had been verified through the locally agreed processes and all were judged to have been appropriately accepted onto the scheme.
- (2) Race and ethnicity were clearly recorded in all cases and diversity issues were actively assessed at an early stage in well over three-quarters of the cases. There was evidence that in all but one instance full attention had been paid to the method most likely to be effective in engaging the child or young person.
- (3) The screening of the indicators of serious harm was accurately completed in all of the prevention cases inspected. Of these, two required a full RoH to others assessment and we judged them to have been accurately completed.
- (4) In all but one of the cases a timely home visit had been carried out and in the great majority of cases these visits had been repeated as required.
- (5) Most of the interventions delivered addressed the likelihood of offending or antisocial behaviour and community reintegration. Overall, we judged interventions delivered to be sufficient in the overwhelming majority of cases.
- (6) There was good evidence of prevention staff demonstrating their commitment to the work they were undertaking and working hard at motivating and supporting the child or young person. We also found evidence of staff reinforcing positive behaviour.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- (1) Intervention plans were completed within the appropriate timescales in less than two-thirds of the cases.
- (2) In general, intervention planning lacked focus. In very few plans was there any time limit or an exit strategy and this resulted in some cases being involved in prevention activity for significant periods.
- (3) Work on reviewing the Onset and the intervention plan was insufficient.

### **2.2 General criterion:**

*The health of children and young people who are at risk of offending is promoted by the work of the YOT and its partners.*

### **Strengths:**

- (1) In almost two-thirds of the cases the Onset identified need in relation to emotional or mental health. In all of the relevant cases there was evidence that staff had helped to ensure that the child or young person was supported in accessing local services.
- (2) In one case a young person with a weight problem was engaged with appropriately at the YOT and was able to demonstrate an improvement in her self-esteem and a reduced risk of her offending. Detailed attention was given to diet and nutrition by a health worker.
- (3) In another case where the child or young person's behaviour was affecting the whole family work was done to address anger management problems and his views on authority that had demonstrably improved family relationships.
- (4) There was evidence of a very positive response by the CAHMS when prevention staff had concerns about a case of self-harm.

### **Area for improvement:**

- (1) We were concerned about the risks to future funding for substance misuse services in preventative work in the future.

### **2.3 General criterion:**

*Children and young people who are at risk of offending are safeguarded through the work of the YOT and its partners, to contribute to the promotion of their welfare and, where applicable, their protection.*

Bradford and District YOT was located within the children's services division of the local authority and the YOT manager was line managed by the assistant

director. The YOT had direct access to the children's services database, and vice versa. All new referrals into the YOT were checked against this database and, where applicable, contact was established with the allocated social worker. In all cases, the child or young person's social care status was clearly recorded.

**Strengths:**

- (1) In the great majority of cases there was evidence of an active and early assessment of potentially discriminatory or disadvantaging factors. In every case where such factors were identified a plan had been put in place to minimise its impact.
- (2) The Family Support Panel met each week to discuss family or placement breakdown. There was representation from a number of agencies including the Bradford and District YOT.
- (3) During the month prior to the inspection, the YOT representative on the panel had been able to refer and ensure the appropriate allocation of five cases to a number of YOT prevention programmes based at the Young People's Support Unit.
- (4) The Chair of the Panel recognised the value and impact of the integrated working between social care and the YOT: "*The early intervention of the YOT in preventing anti-social behaviour and offending behaviour contributes to settling young people and offers a greater chance of stabilising placements*".
- (5) In every prevention case in which a relevant issue had been identified, the overall quality of the work to help children and young people to 'Stay Safe' was judged to be sufficient.

**2.4 General criterion:**

*Children and young people who are at risk of offending are enabled and encouraged to achieve their potential.*

**Strengths:**

- (1) Administrative support staff gathered background educational history in all cases referred to the prevention team so providing useful material to inform planning.
- (2) In every prevention case where a need related to mainstream education had been identified, there was evidence that interventions related to that need had been offered to the child or young person.
- (3) In the vast majority of such cases, it was clear that the preventative service had helped to ensure that the child or young person was supported in accessing local services. In the single case where ETE services had not been provided, the detail was referred to a manager and then on to the Preventative Steering Group.

### **Area for improvement:**

- (1) Notwithstanding the strength at 2 above, in only a third of cases where the child or young person had been formally excluded from school was there evidence of the YOT and partners taking action to reintegrate children and young people into full-time education.

**Conclusion:** These criteria are assessed as **good**.

## **Work with children and young people who have offended**

### **2.5 General criterion:**

*The YOT (or others on its behalf) undertake appropriate activities to prevent children and young people from reoffending.*

### **Strengths:**

- (1) In the great majority of cases the initial Asset had been completed in line with the national standard timescales. In each case the child or young person had been interviewed on at least one occasion, and in well over three-quarters of cases the parent/carer had also been interviewed to inform the Asset. We were pleased to find evidence that where parents/carers were involved in the assessment, specific and individual needs identified by them in relation to their children had been noted by the YOT worker.
- (2) In all but one case positive, supportive and pro-social factors had also been identified. Overall, initial Assets were judged to be of a sufficient quality in more than three-quarters of the cases inspected.
- (3) Most children or young people were invited to complete a 'What Do You Think?' self-assessment form and of these the vast majority did so.
- (4) With a very small number of exceptions, race and ethnicity information had been clearly recorded and, more importantly, diversity issues and other individual needs had been actively assessed. Of such cases, where these factors were identified, in all but one instance a plan was in place to minimise their impact.
- (5) In most cases full attention had been paid to the methods likely to be most effective with a particular child or young person.
- (6) Overall, the quality of the assessment of diversity to promote engagement with children and young people, who had offended, was considered to be at least sufficient in 88% of the cases inspected.

- (7) The YOT manager chaired a regular meeting to review all high or very high RoH cases. The case manager and their line manager attended and this ensured a good level of awareness and managerial oversight and brought consistency to the decision-making process around them.
- (8) In all but one of the cases in which the RoSH screen indicated that it was required, a full RoSH assessment was completed.
- (9) In the vast majority of these cases, inspectors agreed with the RoSH classification. In almost three-quarters of these cases, it was considered that the assessment form had been completed to a sufficient standard.
- (10) There was clear evidence of a timely and purposeful home visit being made and repeated as necessary in well over three-quarters of the cases inspected.
- (11) Initial intervention plans were completed within the appropriate timescales in every case, and in the vast majority it was clear who would deliver the intervention.
- (12) In all but one relevant case the intervention plan was considered to be sensitive to diversity issues. This was in keeping with the general culture of good practice in relation to diversity within Bradford.
- (13) Overall, in over three-quarters of the cases inspected, the quality of intervention planning was judged to be sufficient.
- (14) Reviews of intervention plans, including the progress made against objectives, were completed in line with the national standard timescales in well over three-quarters of the cases in the sample. A similar proportion had a RoH review, again within the appropriate timescale. Of these, three-quarters had clearly been informed by a review of Asset.
- (15) RoSH assessments had been reviewed following a significant change in all relevant cases.
- (16) In over 90% of cases, the first appointment following sentence took place in accordance with the national standard timescales, and in the remaining few instances they occurred within five working days. A similar proportion of cases showed evidence of steps having been taken to ensure that the child or young person fully understood the requirements of their order and the penalties should it be breached. These steps were taken as part of a timely and comprehensive induction process.
- (17) The frequency of appointments in all but one case met the national standard requirements and in almost three-quarters of the cases supported the achievement of intervention plan objectives. The frequency of appointments was also considered sufficient to meet any RoH considerations that had been identified.
- (18) In every case the YOT workers monitored attendance across all interventions, regardless of who was delivering them, and in the vast majority of cases took effective action where it was required to ensure compliance.

- (19) We were satisfied that judgements about acceptability or unacceptability were both consistent and appropriate in the vast majority of cases. On the whole, where breach action was taken, it was instigated within the required timescales. Overall, Bradford and District YOT demonstrated good practice in promoting compliance.
- (20) In two-thirds of cases there was evidence that action had been taken to address accommodation issues. In all of those cases there had been ongoing monitoring of accommodation needs throughout the course of the order.
- (21) It was clear in the vast majority of cases that YOT workers had a high level of commitment to their work with children and young people and motivated and supported them throughout their sentence. In over two-thirds of the cases staff demonstrated their ability to reinforce positive behaviour when displayed by the child or young person under supervision.
- (22) Youth Offender Panels consistently had reports provided to them by case managers several days before a meeting. This allowed them to prepare in advance and made the panel meetings run more efficiently. The panel members then aimed to provide consistency throughout the process with as many of the same members attending the review panel for each child or young person.

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

- (1) Although panel members found the reports they received helpful and informative, inspectors did find examples of reports that were not as up to date about the child or young person's circumstances as they should have been.
- (2) The major area for improvement in core work related to the need for greater consistency across this large team of workers. There was insufficient systematic management oversight and a need for the improvement of the methods of identifying and adopting best practice across the different groupings in the team.

#### **2.6 General criterion:**

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

There was a strong commitment from the health and substance misuse services to provide a range of interventions to support the YOT's work. Substance misuse services were used effectively in prevention work, CAHMS was very accessible both for advice and intervention including in cases where serious mental health issues were identified, and the general health services offered health support to children and young people and advice to case managers. There were strong partnership arrangements between health and the YOT, and the needs of children and young people referred by the YOT were regarded as a high priority by health services.

**Strengths:**

- (1) A SQUIFA form had been completed appropriately in three-quarters of relevant cases and a formal intervention delivered to the majority of these children or young people.
- (2) Health staff undertook regular audits of Asset completions to ensure that any children or young people, who had emotional or mental health difficulties, had been referred appropriately.
- (3) In a small proportion of cases the health workers in the YOT had identified the need for a specialist referral to be made outside and this had been done, as appropriate. There was good evidence of YOT staff maintaining close contact and giving active support to the children and young people who needed to access local services.
- (4) Health specialists were involved in training case managers in health matters, to improve their ability to identify cases where a referral was needed. There was also an intention to set up a 'Health Room' within the YOT, which would contain relevant information and provide a safe space for work on health matters.
- (5) All of the health staff, including the child psychiatrist, attended a weekly 'virtual team' meeting where all new cases were discussed and a tailored service designed for the child or young person. Advice was also offered to case managers at this meeting and an emergency back-up service provided by CAHMS.

**Area for improvement:**

- (1) There would be value in health workers conducting regular audits of Asset completions, to make sure that no child or young person who had been scored 2 or more for physical health or substance misuse issues was missed from their involvement. This would help to ensure more consistent engagement and practice by case managers.

**2.7 General criterion:**

*Children and young people who have offended are safeguarded through the work of the YOT to contribute to the promotion of their welfare and, where applicable, their protection.*

**Strengths:**

- (1) Administrative support staff had direct access to the children's services computer database and checked the status of all new referrals to the YOT. This was clearly recorded in every case inspected. In the small number of cases where children's services was actively involved, the YOT worker could evidence contact and involvement during the assessment and supervision period.

- (2) In all cases where a vulnerability action plan had been produced, the content of the plan clearly met the assessed need.
- (3) In the majority of cases the overall quality of the work to help children and young people to stay safe was considered to be sufficient.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) There were two cases in the inspection sample when the children's services department would not accept a referral from the YOT worker, even though the issue to be addressed was rightfully their responsibility.
- (2) Of the nine children or young people in the sample who had been identified as being at risk either from themselves or from others, a vulnerability action plan had been produced in only four cases.

**2.8 General criterion:**

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

**Strengths:**

- (1) In most cases where there was evidence of an ETE need an appropriate referral for specialist assessment within the YOT had been made. In the majority of cases a relevant intervention was offered to the child or young person by the education worker, which promoted learning opportunities and attainment.
- (2) Of the small number of children or young people excluded from mainstream school, in three-quarters of these cases there was evidence of the YOT having taken action to seek reintegration of the pupil into full-time education.
- (3) There was a comprehensive handbook for case managers which included details of a wide range of bridging provision and post-16 options for children and young people not in ETE, guidance on SEN and benefits information.
- (4) The YOT, together with its partners, had been instrumental in developing a wide range of accredited alternative provision in vocational skills, sports, arts and personal development. Some of these opportunities were funded by the YOT to act as a bridge back into mainstream ETE, and others formed part of the alternative curriculum programme available to schools. Examples included the arts accredited Dance Academy, furniture restoration project, Prince's Trust volunteers and city farm. The Pupil Referral Unit was well regarded and recently received a positive Ofsted report.
- (5) The NEET figures within the Bradford area, although high, were improving and there had been significant strategic activity to improve the range and accessibility of post-16 provision. Recent examples included a coordinated

cross-agency bid to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for improvement of provision and support for children and young people at level 1 or pre-entry level; New Budget pilot money was directed at those NEET for 20 weeks or more, which had the potential to benefit YOT clients; and additional provision for those who had been NEET for under 20 weeks. Bradford College had recently introduced more flexible course start dates, with two intakes per year instead of one. A wide range of personal development opportunities, such as activity agreements, were rapidly being developed with a range of partners which included the YMCA and the youth service.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- (1) The criteria for referring a child or young person to the specialist education worker in the YOT were too narrow.
- (2) There was no system for checking that referrals were being made in all appropriate cases.
- (3) With the exception of ISSP, where a tutor undertook literacy and numeracy assessments and provided basic skills tutoring, the YOT did not routinely undertake these nor any other form of educational assessment such as preferred learning style questionnaires.

**Conclusion:** These criteria are assessed as **good**.

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

#### **2.9 General criterion:**

*Parents/carers are supported in addressing their children's antisocial and offending behaviour.*

The two parenting workers were dealing with an average of 25 to 30 families each. The profile indicated predominantly lone females and between 10% and 15% of families were from black and minority ethnic groups. The workers were trained in the parallel parenting approach and focused on dealing with teenagers. They worked within Parents Network, a local umbrella organisation for those working in parenting support. An area strategy had been developed within the positive contribution strand of children's planning and had been launched just before the inspection. They dealt with voluntary parenting support, as well as parenting orders made in both the criminal and the education court settings.

### **Strengths:**

- (1) The parenting workers demonstrated a commitment to working flexibly around the needs of parents/carers. They had sufficient knowledge and skills to work with a diverse population and their differing parenting styles. They were aware of the need to develop their own knowledge base in this area but recognised too that families from some black and minority ethnic groups might prefer support external to their own community. They also worked in the evenings to accommodate working parents/carers.
- (2) Assessments were consistently carried out, with exit strategies being established at the beginning. There had been small numbers returning for additional support, although this was usually in the form of one off telephone conversations. A structured form was used to collect feedback about the services provided.
- (3) In all relevant cases parents/carers had been made aware of the requirements of the interventions being undertaken by their children. All were kept informed about the progress being made during supervision and we were particularly impressed at the evidence of active engagement of parents/carers in all cases.
- (4) There was a high level of assessment of parenting skills that were well completed and which in three-quarters of the cases proposed an intervention. All of these cases were sensitive to the diverse needs of the parent/carer and the intervention was clearly linked to the assessment of need.
- (5) The interventions used were judged to promote care and control and in every case we assessed the quality of work to be a least sufficient, to ensure that parents/carers were supported in addressing their children's antisocial and offending behaviour.
- (6) Health workers contributed to parenting groups and made joint visits to parents/carers, accompanying the parenting worker.

### **Area for improvement:**

- (1) There was evidence of a communication gap within the network of involved agencies and staff. This had manifested itself in one particular example, where a parent who was actively involved on a voluntary basis was made the subject of a parenting order in court. There was also evidence that some of the YOT staff were not fully aware of the service available and there was a need for further internal communication to correct this.

**Conclusion:** This criterion is assessed as **good**.

## Outcomes of work with children and young people in the community

### **2.10 General criterion:**

*The YOT promotes consultation with service users about the services they receive, and this information is used to improve outcomes.*

### **Strengths:**

- (1) There were several examples of the YOT seeking views from service users and using that information. A particularly impressive example was the response to a local survey of children and young people across Bradford, in which they identified bullying and the lack of a clear point of contact for them to gain support, as the main area of concern. In response, the YOT joined with the youth service and secured funding to establish a telephone helpline using text messaging. This was staffed five days a week by YOT and youth service staff. The equipment had been installed in each of the main offices and children and young people could text in a concern and receive supportive advice and information very quickly by a return text message. The ITC then collated the statistics so that the agencies were able to demonstrate performance. The project was professionally advertised around the area and, although only established for a relatively short period of time, was seen to be well used.
- (2) Equally impressive was the YOT's commitment to encouraging children and young people to comment on the Viewpoint software provided to gather their views about the YOT specifically for the inspection. Two hundred and thirty-five responses were achieved directly as a result of the YOT manager's promotion of, and support for this activity. This was far in excess of the usual level of response for these inspections and was also in keeping with the general culture in Bradford and District YOT of involvement by the children and young people in commenting about the services provided. It was also pleasing to note that the YOT manager had the key findings from the Viewpoint information turned into a publication which was widely circulated.
- (3) The YOT demonstrated a very strong commitment to responding to the views and needs of service users by the following examples of how this had contributed to service delivery:
  - development of Foundation Housing Supported Accommodation in response to young people's concerns about homelessness
  - active engagement of young people in preventative programmes particularly the Junior Youth inclusion projects
  - the YOT Annual Showcase event developed in response to young people's concerns about their negative image in the media
  - awards ceremony established with Connexions to celebrate achievement
  - the Clean Break project commissioned following comments by girls to increase the number of programmes to meet their needs

- the Asian young offender's video made in response to Asian young people wanting to express their point of view.
- (4) The Management Board received an annual report on complaints and compliments in line with the YOT policy on the topic. In the last reported year there had been ten complaints and 25 compliments.
  - (5) Five hundred children and young people received certificates to celebrate their achievements at six awards ceremonies organised in partnership with Careers Bradford, Connexions West Yorkshire, Education Bradford and a range of other YOT partners.
  - (6) The YOT commissioned an independent telephone survey (July 2007) of children and young people and their parents/carers. Out of 111 young people, 66% rated the service as good/excellent. The same survey revealed that 86% of parents/carers also viewed the service as good or excellent. Of particular interest was the response concerning victims. In the sample, 95% of children and young people who had offended stated that they had not considered the effect of the victim, which confirmed the importance of victim work being embedded in practice.
  - (7) The YOT was a member of the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy Group which was part of the Making a Positive Contribution Outcome Group.

### **2.11 General criterion:**

*The YOT demonstrates positive outcomes in its work with children and young people in the community.*

### **Strengths:**

- (1) Of the prevention cases inspected, there was evidence of some progress against the first criminogenic factor in three-quarters of the cases. This reduced to just under half the cases for the second priority criminogenic factor. But for the third priority criminogenic factor, almost two-thirds of cases demonstrated improvement.
- (2) In just under two-thirds of the prevention cases there was good evidence that learning outcomes and new skills had been applied and that there was a positive change in attitudes and behaviour. In all cases, resources had been allocated in line with the child or young person's likelihood of offending and/or serious antisocial behaviour.
- (3) Of the prevention sample cases, only one young person had received a reprimand or final warning. Bradford and District YOT had demonstrated a significant reduction in the number of children and young people who were first-time entrants into the criminal justice system. From YJB figures for the

period April to September 2007 this was – 14%, which was better than regional or national averages. This had been a trend in the district since these figures were initially published.

- (4) The YOT was on course to meet the YJB target of a 5% reduction in reoffending in the pre-court (– 6.4%) and community sentence (– 10.4%) cohorts. It was just short of the target for First tier cases (– 3.6%). The YOT had agreed a Public Service Agreement with the regional Government Office in relation to recidivism. It was on course to meet this target in all community cohorts.
- (5) Recidivism figures have been analysed by ethnicity that showed some over-representation of Black/British children and young people. This was reported to the Management Board. As a result, a mentoring scheme was being developed to engage specifically with black and minority ethnic children and young people who had offended.
- (6) Of the cases in the sample of children and young people who had offended, three-quarters had not been convicted of a further offence since the start of the order.
- (7) In just over three-quarters of the cases community reparation had been undertaken.
- (8) An Asset assessment had been re-scored in the vast majority of cases, and in most of those the recent score showed an improvement over the initial score.
- (9) Where accommodation had been identified as a problem area, this had improved in the majority of cases.
- (10) In all the cases there was evidence of the application of skills that had been learned. There were positive, demonstrable changes in attitudes and behaviour in around two-thirds of the cases. We considered that resources had been allocated, in the vast majority of cases, consistent with the child or young person's RoH to others and LoR.
- (11) Planned objectives had been efficiently achieved to a sufficient standard in 82% of the cases of children and young people who had offended.

**Area for improvement:**

- (1) There was no general practice of aggregating and evaluating data on the outcome of specific interventions and using that systematically to inform and improve future practice.

**Conclusion:** These criteria are assessed as **excellent**.

### **3. WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO CUSTODIAL SENTENCES**

#### **3.1 General criterion:**

*The YOT (or others on its behalf), undertake appropriate activities during the custodial phase of the sentence to prevent children and young people from reoffending.*

Overall, the work undertaken with children or young people serving the custodial part of their sentences scored slightly less well than those in the community. This may have linked to some extent with the difficulties of access and assumptions about RoH and risk of safeguarding whilst they were in a secure establishment.

#### **Strengths:**

- (1) An initial Asset was completed in line with the national standard timescales in the majority of cases.
- (2) In all cases where parents/carers were involved in the assessment individual needs identified by them in relation to their children were appropriately recorded.
- (3) In two-thirds of the Assets completed at the start of the sentence, supportive and pro-social factors were identified.
- (4) All of the children and young people who were invited to complete a self-assessment. 'What Do You Think?' form did so.
- (5) In three-quarters of the custodial cases race and ethnicity were clearly recorded and diversity issues had been actively assessed at an early stage. In the majority of those cases, factors had been identified, and on most occasions plans had been put in place to minimise their impact.
- (6) In all but one case the PSR was sent to the secure establishment within 24 hours and other documents sent in an equally timely fashion. There were six cases where specific risk factors had been assessed and in all of these the concerns had been communicated both verbally and in writing to the secure establishment.
- (7) In all but one case the YOT worker was present to contribute to the initial training plan. In the majority of these cases a written plan was completed within the appropriate timescales and endorsed by the child or young person. The plans were clear as to those elements that would be delivered in custody and those which would remain to be delivered during the community period of the sentence.

- (8) At least three-quarters of the interventions planned were judged likely to address reoffending behaviour, staying safe and community reintegration issues.
- (9) We agreed with the RoSH classification in the majority of cases.
- (10) In all cases where there had been a substance or alcohol misuse need identified in the Asset, an appropriate intervention had been delivered in a timely manner. This also applied in the majority of cases where any 16 plus ETE needs were identified.
- (11) Overall, the level of contact between the YOT worker and children or young people in secure establishments conformed to the national standard and supported the achievement of training plan objectives.
- (12) In three-quarters of the relevant cases there was evidence of contact between the YOT worker and parents/carers to encourage their involvement and attendance at planning meetings. This included practical support such as offering lifts.
- (13) In all cases there was good evidence of YOT workers contributing actively to the final review meetings.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) The opportunity to complete a 'What Do You Think?' form was not offered in every case. In the sample of children or young people in custody, this was only done in just over a third of cases.
- (2) The quality of RoSH assessments was judged to be sufficient in less than half of the cases assessed.
- (3) RoSH assessments covered victim issues thoroughly in only one case out of the 12 concerned.
- (4) Overall, work related to the assessment of RoSH with children and young people in custody was judged to be insufficient in the majority of cases.

**3.2 General criterion:**

*Children and young people are safeguarded through the work of the YOT during the custodial phase of the sentence to contribute to the promotion of their welfare and, where applicable, their protection.*

**Strengths:**

- (1) In all cases the YOT had checked the status of the child or young person with children's services and recorded that status clearly. In all relevant cases there was evidence of liaison between the YOT worker and the children's social care services staff.

- (2) There was only one case of concern within the sample which resulted in a referral to children's services. In this case there was evidence that the referral had been properly responded to and joint work had been undertaken to address the issues of concern.
- (3) A number of the children and young people in custody had in the past been a risk to themselves, but there was evidence that these matters had been looked into by children's services.
- (4) The overall quality of work to help children and young people to stay safe during the custodial phase was judged to be at least sufficient in over three-quarters of the cases.

**Area for improvement:**

- (1) There were four cases where inspectors disagreed with the worker's view that a vulnerability action plan was not required. The YOT did not have sufficient guidance for staff about this.

**3.3 General criterion:**

*The YOT (or others on its behalf), undertake appropriate activities during the community phase of the sentence, to prevent children and young people from reoffending.*

**Strengths:**

- (1) In all but one case a timely and comprehensive Asset was completed on release from custody.
- (2) It was routine practice for children and young people to be collected from the secure establishment and brought immediately to the YOT for an induction on release. This approach recognised the risk associated with the period immediately on release and we considered this to be a commendable use of resources.
- (3) All young people released from custody were given the opportunity of a health check. There was only one case, within the sample, of the child or young person developing new health needs whilst serving their sentence and this was considered to have been addressed sufficiently.
- (4) In over three-quarters of the case sample the frequency of appointments during the community phase met the national standard and clearly supported the achievement of intervention plan objectives.
- (5) There was evidence of the YOT worker monitoring attendance across all interventions and taking effective action to ensure compliance in the vast majority of cases.

- (6) Judgements about the acceptability or otherwise of failures to attend were considered to be consistent in all cases.
- (7) It was clear in the vast majority of cases that the YOT worker was able to demonstrate commitment to their work with the child or young person, and also to motivate and support them throughout their sentence. Examples of positive behaviour were reinforced.
- (8) In all but one case emotional or mental health services were provided in accordance with the national standard. This also applied to substance misuse services.

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

- (1) Reviews of intervention plans were not sufficiently timely. Nor were Asset assessments re-scored or RoSH assessments reviewed appropriately.
- (2) ETE services were not adequately provided to children and young people following release.
- (3) There was insufficient evidence of learning plans continuing after release, and in only one case was literacy re-assessed.
- (4) We could not find evidence that work done following release built upon that begun in custody.
- (5) Constructive interventions intended to challenge the child or young person's offending behaviour were used in only just over half of these cases.

#### **3.4 General criterion:**

*The YOT demonstrates positive outcomes in its work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences.*

#### **Strengths:**

- (1) Asset had been re-scored in all but one of the custody cases, and in just under two-thirds of cases this recent score showed an improvement over the initial score.
- (2) In the custody case sample there was evidence that there had been a reduction in factors linked to a risk of safeguarding in the majority of cases, and that in all relevant cases safeguarding factors were managed effectively. In nearly three-quarters of the cases inspected full attention had been given to community reintegration.
- (3) In a similar proportion accommodation provision for the child or young person had improved since the start of the community phase of the order.
- (4) 82% of the children or young people who had been in custody had not reoffended whilst under supervision.

- (5) Resources were judged to have been allocated and used in line with the assessed need, RoH and LoR.

***Area for improvement:***

- (1) In less than half of the relevant cases was there evidence of learning having been applied.

**Conclusion:** These criteria are assessed as **adequate**.

## **4. VICTIMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

### **4.1 General criterion:**

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

### **Strengths:**

- (1) As a result of the systematic approach developed by the victim workers, the numbers of people approached and offered the chance of ongoing involvement had been very high. During the period April 2006 to September 2007 Bradford managed to achieve the national targets, exceeding regional, family and national averages.
- (2) Victim contact staff were able to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of culturally appropriate approaches to victims and gave examples of how this was achieved.
- (3) There was evidence that efforts were made to try to engage the victim in a restorative justice process. Within the inspection sample there were two examples of victim and offender mediation, and one of a family group conference having taken place to good effect.
- (4) In cases where the victim chose not to attend a Youth Offender Panel, there were some good examples of victim impact statements being presented by victim workers. This ensured that panel members received good information which they could take into account in their engagement with the child or young person.
- (5) There was evidence in well over three-quarters of the relevant cases that appropriate priority had been accorded to victim safety by the YOT and other workers.
- (6) Some of the reparation work undertaken consisted of significantly large projects in which children and young people needed to invest their time and effort, but to which they could subsequently return as members of the community. The YOT manager had instituted a practice when such a large-scale project was completed of having a plaque erected, indicating that the work had been done by the children and young people from the YOT. This was a positive way of projecting an image of children and young people in Bradford, and was one of several such examples.

- (7) In the vast majority of cases, reparation work began within the first three months of the order.
- (8) The First Bus Company approached Bradford and District YOT about devising a strategy to address the problem of fraudulent use of travel passes in West Yorkshire. They had successfully worked with Leeds YOT on a trial. Following a meeting with the YOT manager, it was agreed that the company would write to the parents/carers of children and young people caught using altered passes and offer them an intervention at the YOT, based on the restorative justice model. The company would then accept a letter of apology. As a result there had been a sharp decline in reoffending, with no child or young person repeating this deception in Bradford. The scheme had since been rolled out to Halifax and Huddersfield with encouraging outcomes.

**Areas for improvement:**

- (1) Victim assessments were not consistently timely, nor were they recorded using a standard document. Each of the victim workers had their own approach to this area of work and, although they spoke to each other and were aware of each other's different approaches, there was no mechanism in place to ensure that the approach, as experienced by the victim, was of a consistent quality.
- (2) Given the high number of victims who were effectively contacted, there was a disappointingly small proportion who were willing to participate in the system in an active manner. The victim workers recognised that this was an area requiring attention and hoped to develop a methodology which would result in an increase in positive responses from victims.
- (3) One of the letters of apology that had been received by a victim was not considered to be sincere, because of both its content and presentation, and this practice should be reviewed to ensure that standards are high in every case.

**Conclusion:** This criterion is assessed as **good**.

## 5. MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

### Leadership and planning

#### **5.1 General criterion:**

*The Management Board works actively with others, including the YOT manager, in an integrated way to maximise the likelihood of improving outcomes for children and young people.*

#### **Strengths:**

- (1) The YOT Management Board was Chaired by the Director of Children's Services. Membership was appropriately representative and at the correct level of seniority and included representatives from the voluntary sector.
- (2) The Board was well placed to integrate YOT business with other relevant strategic developments across the area. The Board Chair and the YOT manager sat on a range of other strategic bodies. Notably, they were both members of the Crime and Disorder Panel and the Safeguarding Board. The YOT manager was also a member of the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board, in which he also represented the other West Yorkshire YOTs. The YOT was also represented on the Children's and Young People's Partnership which had a young offenders crosscutting theme under the Every Child Matters outcomes strand, recognising them as one of the most vulnerable groups of children and young people in the district.
- (3) A substantial focus to diversity issues was given at Board meetings and reports received included an ethnic breakdown as a matter of course. The YOT manager was linked to the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Race Issues group on the topic of overrepresentation of black people in the criminal justice system.
- (4) There was Board level agreement that black and minority ethnic staff within the YOT should be supported to attend a West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board event designed for that group of staff.
- (5) The Board received the results of a race audit undertaken by the YOT and supported its further analysis of the data, which resulted in the development of the black mentoring project.
- (6) Board members received performance reports which regularly included a detailed analysis of the data. Where there was evidence of underperformance, an improvement plan was provided, supported by exception reports to monitor developments. Examples over time included remands, parenting and mental health work. There had been particular

concern regarding performance on ETE. Work took place to involve the Board in supporting a series of actions to address this, including the significant development of 'The Academy', a dance-based education project. Additionally, the YOT manager became a member of the Economic Well-being Outcome Group, thus chairing the NEET FIX Working Group. Finally, the Board supported the YOT's involvement in Bradford's Summer Arts College.

- (7) Members of the Board who were interviewed described the group as well chaired, businesslike and appropriately attended. They were clear that it was their role to challenge the YOT manager about performance issues, as well as to support and advise him about ways forward.
- (8) Documentation for all meetings was received in advance, and the meetings were focused on performance, although there were also efforts to understand something of the content and quality of the work done within the YOT. Some of this was achieved by the attendance of Board members at awards events.

**Area for improvement:**

- (1) The Board did not receive regular reports specifically covering health and substance misuse issues. This could result in these topics not receiving the level of attention deserved and this required consideration.

**Partnership and resources**

**5.2 General criterion:**

*Partner organisations and the YOT work together effectively to protect the public, reduce antisocial and offending behaviour and deliver positive outcomes for children and young people.*

Partnership arrangements with and around the YOT were impressive and it was very clear that the YOT manager had been a lead figure in developing and more importantly maintaining these. This resulted in there being a wide range of provision available for the children and young people and much of it would be accessible for them after their time under formal supervision.

**Strengths:**

- (1) The YOT manager was praised by members of the Board for his business acumen and his recognition of the benefits to be gained by securing funding options as contributions to piloting new projects.
- (2) He was committed to commissioning services from the voluntary sector and other partners, and during 2007/2008 some 37% of the total budget was used in that way.

- (3) The Board was properly supported by the required partners, who made the appropriate contribution in both seconded staff and pooled budget.
- (4) Bradford and District YOT had been influential in developing the district's approach to tackling antisocial behaviour as part of the Respect action plan pilot. Funding was secured to implement new work with children and young people at risk of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour and this was overseen by one of the YOT team leaders. As a result, a clearer process had resulted about how the agencies worked together to deliver a consistent and equitable service. This also entailed the separation of processes for children and young people and for adults. Significantly all agencies had agreed that no ASBO court application could be submitted without the endorsement of the YOT manager (who was also the lead manager on this area of work for the children's services department).
- (5) The YOT manager gave significant priority to challenging the commonly held negative image of children and young people. Examples of this included the publication of reoffending rates, in terms of the proportion of those who had not reoffended. Similarly, there were several award events each year, when children and young people received certificates and acclaim for a variety of achievements. There was a lively and informative website, which included information about these events as well as numerous Justice and other awards that had been achieved by the YOT for its work.
- (6) The YOT had written agreements with a wide range of statutory and voluntary partners that were reviewed annually and amended as required. A number of these were submitted as evidence. Some of which were checked and found specifically to include appropriate arrangements for grievance, supervision and appraisal, and access to home agency's information systems.
- (7) The partnership model used by health was to work with the YOT, but not to integrate health and substance misuse staff into the team. There were seen to be advantages with this approach, including the provision of cover for absences and also the continuation of services in the community after a period of supervision had ended. Notwithstanding this, those staff still reported feeling part of the YOT and colleagues to other YOT staff.

***Areas for improvement:***

- (1) Despite the progress in terms of engaging a wide range of partners to provide services, practice was inconsistent.
- (2) The comprehensive written agreement between the YOT and children's services was not sufficiently understood by all practice staff and managers within the department, and this required some attention.

## Staff supervision, development and training

### **5.3 General criterion:**

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

#### **Strengths:**

- (1) Views on managerial performance were sought from 38 members of staff. The overwhelming majority felt well informed about policies and procedures, and considered that managers in the YOT demonstrated professional management approaches. A similar proportion considered that positive leadership behaviour was the norm.
- (2) Well over three-quarters of respondents considered their training and developmental needs to have been met and the same proportion had formal supervision at least six weekly. These supervision sessions were considered to be of at least a sufficient quality and in almost half of them excellent.
- (3) Twenty-nine staff members had completed their PCEP and six had begun their foundation degree in YOT work.
- (4) All staff had been CRB checked, and renewed on a three yearly basis.
- (5) Two-thirds of those asked had received a completed written appraisal in the 12 months prior to the inspection. However, the total asked included a number of staff who had joined the YOT during the preceding year. Of those, almost three-quarters were clear that it was linked to the area business plan.
- (6) The YOT had a written compliments and complaints procedure, which was reported on annually to the strategic Board. In 2006, ten complaints and 25 compliments were received.

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

- (1) There was no costed staff training plan in place.
- (2) The YOT worked on the basis of case workers holding the full range of case types. This had clear benefits for workflow management, but some staff (particularly qualified members) felt that their specific skills and expertise were somewhat underused.
- (3) There was evidence of a degree of inconsistency in the approach taken by the different team managers.

**Conclusion:** These criteria are assessed as **excellent**.

## **Appendix 1: Contextual information**

### **Area**

Bradford and District YOT was located in West Yorkshire and, as a single YOT, covered the City of Bradford Metropolitan district.

The area had a population of 467,665 as measured in the Census 2001, 11.8% of which were aged 10-17 years old. This was slightly higher than the average for England, which was 10.4%.

The population of Bradford was predominantly White British (78.3%), the population with a black and minority ethnic heritage (21.7%) was significantly above the average for England of 8.7%.

Reported crime levels for children and young people aged 10-17 years old across the area at 80 per 1,000, were above the average for England of 53.

The proportion of Looked After Children aged ten and over sanctioned for an offence committed whilst Looked After was 13% in Bradford which was above the average for England of 9%.

### **YOT**

The YOT boundaries were co-terminus with those of West Yorkshire Probation district and West Yorkshire Police Borough Command Units. One PCT (Bradford and Airedale) covered the whole district.

The Youth Justice Plan 2007/2008 showed that the YOT had 101 staff and 74 volunteers. 50% of staff were female and 20% had a black or minority ethnic heritage.

The work of the YOT was based in three main offices located in Bradford and Shipley.

### **YJB performance data**

The YJB summary of overall YOT performance available at the time of the inspection for the period to April-September 2007 gave Bradford and District YOT a score of 3 on a scale where 5 is the maximum. This was above the regional and comparable YOTs performance, but slightly below the national average.

Performance on reducing reoffending received a score of 2, which was below that of all comparators.

## Appendix 2: Inspection data

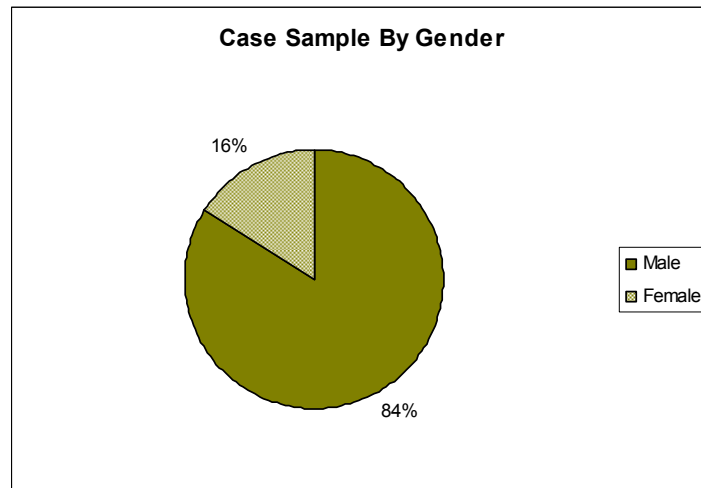
Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in December 2007 and during a contribution to the Bradford and District Joint Area Review in February 2008.

The inspection consisted of:

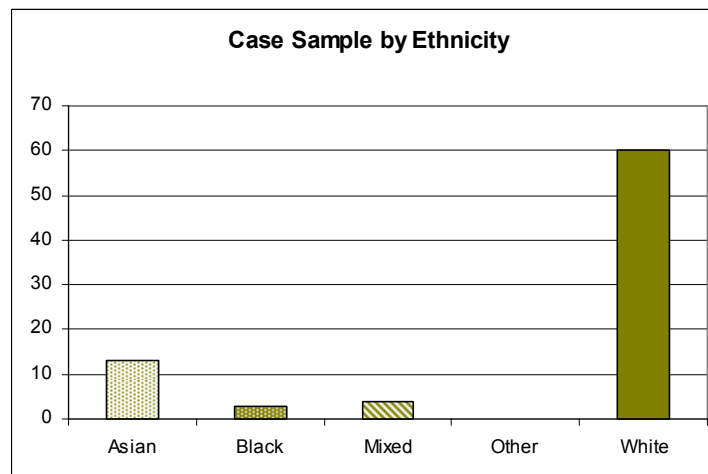
- ◇ evidence in advance
- ◇ examination of YJB performance data and assessments
- ◇ examination of practice in a sample of cases, normally in conjunction with the case manager or other representative, as follows:
  - 12 prevention files
  - 15 final warnings
  - 15 first tier penalties (referral orders, reparation orders)
  - 20 community sentences
  - 18 custodial cases
- ◇ interviews and questionnaire responses from children and young people, parents/carers, and victims
- ◇ interviews with children and young people in custody
- ◇ meetings with staff, managers and partners.

## Data charts

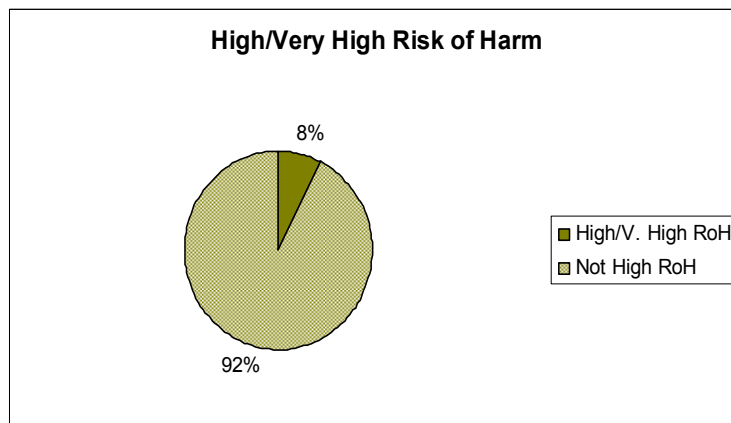
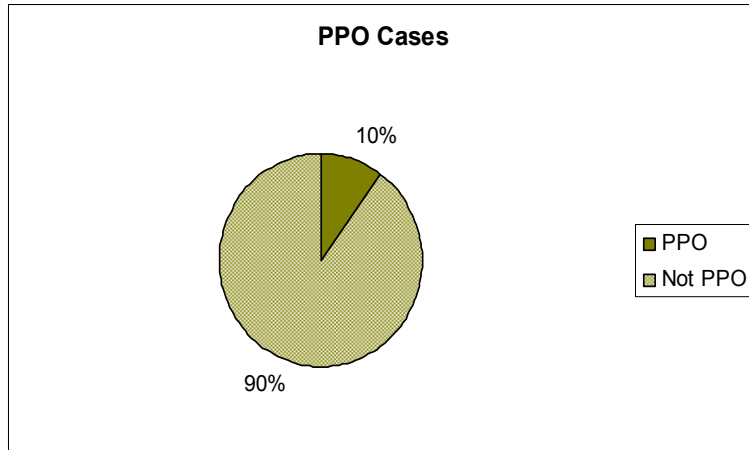
The chosen sample takes into consideration the percentage of girls or young women in contact with the YOT. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



The chosen sample takes into consideration the percentage of black and minority ethnic children or young people in contact with the YOT. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



The chosen sample includes a number of high RoH cases and ISSP/PPO cases. The numbers included depend on the size of the YOT/YOS involved, and range from six to 12 cases per sample.



### **Appendix 3: Joint inspection arrangements**

The joint YOT inspection programme began in September 2003 and is the first full inspection programme to examine the work of the YOTs. It has been implemented over four phases, covering all YOTs in England and Wales over a five year period. From September 2005, the findings in England have contributed to the Joint Area Reviews of children's services (led by Ofsted) and the Corporate Assessment of local authority services (led by the Audit Commission).

### **Appendix 4: Role of HMI Probation and code of practice**

HMI Probation is an independent Inspectorate, funded by the Ministry of Justice and reporting directly to the Secretary of State. Our purpose is to:

- report to the Secretary of State on the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public, whoever undertakes this work under the auspices of the National Offender Management Service or the YJB
- report on the effectiveness of the arrangements for this work, working with other Inspectorates as necessary
- contribute to improved performance by the organisations whose work we inspect
- contribute to sound policy and effective service delivery, especially in public protection, by providing advice and disseminating good practice, based on inspection findings, to Ministers, officials, managers and practitioners
- promote actively race equality and wider diversity issues, especially in the organisations whose work we inspect
- contribute to the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system, particularly through joint work with other inspectorates.

HMI Probation aims to achieve its purpose and to meet the Government's principles for inspection in the public sector by:

- working in an honest, professional, fair and polite way
- reporting and publishing inspection findings and recommendations for improvement in good time and to a good standard
- promoting race equality and wider attention to diversity in all aspects of our work, including within our own employment practices and organisational processes
- for the organisations whose work we are inspecting, keeping to a minimum the amount of extra work arising as a result of the inspection process.

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

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

**<http://www.inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>**