

Bradford YOT Inspection 2007

Summary & Key Findings (May 2008)

Bradford and District YOT was inspected between 3-7 December 2007 as part of a 5-year national inspection programme. The multi-agency Inspection was led by Ray Wegrzyn, Lead Inspector for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) and Inspectors from Ofsted, Police and Health Inspection teams. This bulletin comprises extracts taken from the full report.

Judgement Summary

Criteria	Judgement
Work in the courts	3
Work with children and young people in the community	
Work with children and young people at risk of offending	3
Work with children and young people who have offended	3
Work with parents and carers	3
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Victims and restorative justice	3
Management and leadership	4

Key

- 4 Excellent** - performs strongly, well above minimum requirements with outstanding features.
- 3 Good** - performs well, consistently above minimum requirements with no important shortcomings
- 2 Adequate** - meets minimum requirements
- 1 Inadequate** - does not deliver minimum requirements, with many important shortcomings

Inspection Overview

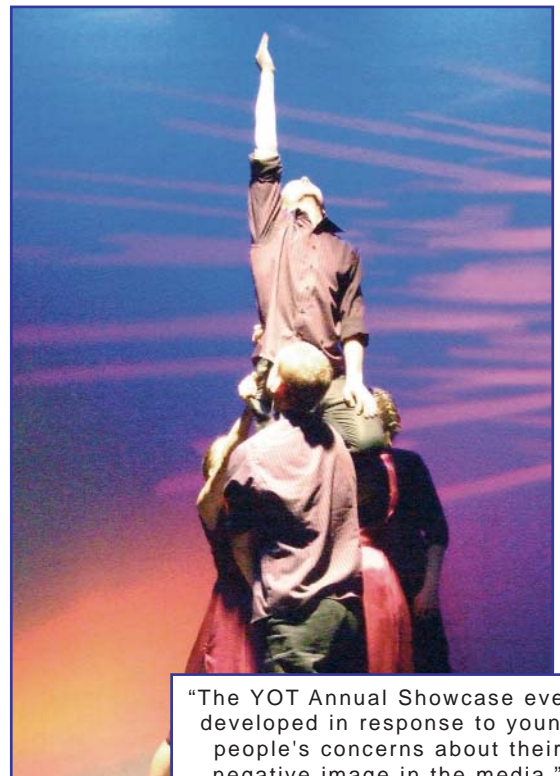
The inspection of Bradford and District YOT took place in the fourth phase of our YOT inspection programme and was undertaken in conjunction with the Enhanced Youth Inspection, the Joint Area Review of children's services and the Corporate Assessment. The findings also contributed to the latter two inspections.

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



"The YOT Annual Showcase event developed in response to young people's concerns about their negative image in the media."

The YOT Inspection formed part of the wider Children's Services Inspection called Joint Area Review (JAR).

How was the Inspection carried out?

- 92 cases examined in detail from prevention to custody
- 9 Inspectors on site
- 11 Bradford & District Youth Justice Board members interviewed
- YOT Manager and 8 YOT Team Leaders interviewed
- Victims, young people, parents, court representatives, partners, volunteers, panel members, YOT staff and admin interviewed
- 3 Projects visited
- 200+ young people's comments through on-line feedback

Key Areas of Inspection

- 1 **Management of Risk** - including assessment, plan reviews, Risk of Serious Harm plans and management of high risk cases.
- 2 **Diversity** - how does the YOT address the diverse needs of young people in its work?



Work in the courts

Good

- Almost three quarters of reports inspected addressed diversity issues sufficiently.
- It was pleasing to note that the vast majority of pre-sentence reports differentiated appropriately between likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm to others.
- Almost all the reports clearly assessed the likelihood of reoffending.
- 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.
- The court was staffed by specialist officers who were all qualified and competent. The role included cover for weekends and bank holidays. The Chairs of the Bradford and Keighley Youth Panels reported excellent relationships with YOT court staff and had confidence in their advice and work.
- 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.

The Inspectors praised the many arts-based projects with offenders which are proving very effective at engaging young people and reducing re-offending. The piece below was written by a participant in a creative writing project.

New Dad

"I'm gonna be a Dad, October the tenth. I've split up with my ex though. I'm with someone else now. I feel OK, it's not unusual. Lots of my mates have had kids, 15 or 16 years old they are. I'll be fifteen when I'm a Dad. When you have a kid at 15 you get out of your old way of life. I'm going to see my kid a lot, be a part of its life, if I'm not in prison."

LB

"I was impressed by the education bridging provision developed by the YOT."
Lead Inspector, YOT Inspection Team

Service User Feedback

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 about their child or young person's progress by 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.

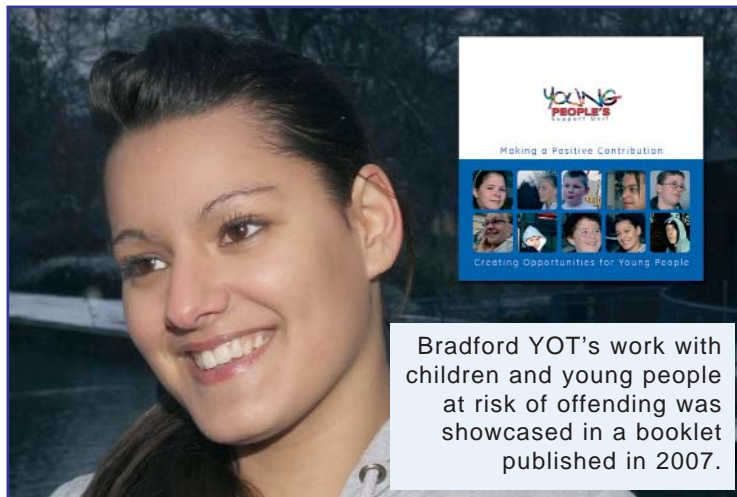
- **All of the respondents found their first contact with the YOT very positive and helpful.**

Work with children and young people in the community

Work with children and young people at risk of offending

Good

- Bradford 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.**
- Most of the interventions delivered addressed the likelihood of offending or antisocial behaviour and community integration. Overall, Inspectors judged interventions delivered to be sufficient in the overwhelming majority of cases.
- 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. Inspectors also found evidence of staff reinforcing positive behaviour.
- In almost two thirds of the cases the Onset identified need in relation to emotional or mental health.
- There was evidence of a very positive response by the CAMHS service when prevention staff had concerns about a case of self-harm.
- In every prevention case, where a need related to mainstream education had been identified, there was evidence that interventions related to that need offered to the child or young person.



Bradford YOT's work with children and young people at risk of offending was showcased in a booklet published in 2007.

Work with children and young people who have offended

Good

- In most cases full attention had been paid to the methods likely to be most effective with a particular child or young person.
- The YOT manager chaired a regular meeting to review all high or very high risk of harm cases, which brought consistency to the decision-making process around them.
- With one exception, the intervention plan was considered to be sensitive to diversity issues.
- Reviews of intervention plans, including the progress made against objectives, were completed in line with national standards in more than 75% of the cases in the sample.
- Bradford Youth Offending Team workers had a high level of commitment to their work with children and young people and supported them throughout their sentence.
- 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.
- All of the health staff, including the child psychiatrist attended a weekly "virtual team" meeting where all new cases were discussed and tailored service designed for the child or young person.
- 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 majority of cases where there was evidence of an ETE need a relevant intervention was offered to the child or young person by the YOT education worker.

Service User Feedback

Survey of Young People's Views

As part of the YOT Inspection 235 children and young people completed an on-line survey of their views about the service provided to them by the YOT.

- **80% of young people stated they were now less likely to re-offend**
- **95% of young people felt that YOT staff were really interested in helping**
- **98% were treated fairly and with respect**

Work with children and young people in the community

Work with parents/carers

Good

- The parenting workers demonstrated a commitment to working flexibly around the needs of parents and 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 BME groups might prefer support external to their own community. They also worked in the evenings to accommodate working parents.
- In all relevant cases parents or carers had been made aware of the requirements of the interventions being undertaken by their child or young person. All were kept informed about the progress being made during supervision and inspectors were particularly impressed at the evidence of active engagement of parents and carers in all cases.

Outcomes of work with children and young people in the community

Excellent

- There were several examples of the YOT seeking views from service users and using the information. A particularly impressive example was, in partnership with the Youth Service, the establishment of a telephone helpline using text messaging (*below*). 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.



- 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:
 - The YOT Annual Showcase event developed in response to young people's concerns about their negative image in the media.
 - Award ceremony established with Connexions to celebrate achievement
 - The Asian young offenders' video made in response to Asian young people wanting to express their point of view.
- 500 young people received certificates (*above*) to celebrate their achievements in 2006/7 at six award ceremonies organised in partnership with Careers Bradford, Connexions West Yorkshire, Education Bradford and a range of other YOT partners.
- Of the prevention cases inspected, there was evidence of some progress against the first criminogenic factor in three quarters of the cases.
- Bradford YOT had demonstrated a significant reduction of the numbers 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 significantly better than region, family groups or national averages.
- 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%).
- Of the cases in the sample of children and young people who had offended, 75% had not been convicted or a further offence since the start if the order.
- In just over three quarters of the cases community reparation had been undertaken.



Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences

Adequate

- Overall, the work undertaken with children or young people serving the custodial part of their sentences, scored slightly less well than that with young people in the community.
- At least 75% of the interventions planned were judged likely to address reoffending behaviour, staying safe and community re-integration issues.
- In all cases there was good evidence of YOT workers contributing actively to the final review meetings.
- A number of children and young people in custody had in the past been a risk to themselves, but there was evidence that these matters have been looked into by children's services.
- 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.
- All young people released from custody were given the opportunity of a health check.
- It was clear in the vast majority of cases that the YOT worker was able to demonstrate commitment to their work with the young person, and also to motivate and support the young person throughout their sentence. Examples of positive behaviour were reinforced.
- 82% of the children or young people who had been in custody had not reoffended whilst under supervision.

Victims and restorative justice

Good

- As a result of the systematic approach developed by the victim workers, the numbers of people approached and offered the chance of ongoing involvement achieved national targets and exceeded regional, family and national averages.
- In cases where the victim chose not to attend a referral order panel there were some good examples of victim impact statements being presented by victim workers.
- There was evidence in well over 75% of the relevant cases that appropriate priority had been accorded to victim safety by the YOT and other workers.
- Some of the reparation work undertaken consisted of significantly large projects in which young people needed to invest their time and effort, but to which they could subsequently return as members of the community.
- First Bus company approached Bradford YOT about devising a strategy to address the problem of fraudulent use of travel passes in West Yorkshire. It was agreed that the company would write to the parents or 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 young person repeating this deception in Bradford.

“The Referral Panels are well recruited, trained and supported.”

Reparation - “Very impressed with the scale and the nature of the work involved, and the engagement of young people.”

“The YOT is well-grounded and fits well into the overall Children’s Services.”

Lead Inspector, YOT Inspection Team



Management and leadership

Excellent

The Bradford and District Youth Justice 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.

Bradford YOT had been influential in developing the borough's approach to tackling antisocial behaviour as part of the Respect action plan pilot. Funding was secured to implement new work with young people at risk of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour and this was overseen by one of the YOT team leaders.

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.

“There is a general culture of good practice in relation to diversity within Bradford.”

“As good a health set-up as I’ve ever seen in any YOT.”

Health Inspector, YOT Inspection Team

“I am delighted but not surprised at the excellent outcome of this Inspection. What is perhaps most pleasing is that I know the systems have been in place for some considerable time. The Inspector’s report reflects the long-term planning and commitment which has been part of the YOT’s culture since its creation. There are areas where the YOT can and will improve - there is no complacency on the part of Services to Children and Young People in Bradford - but I congratulate Paul, his management team, his staff, the many volunteers and other partners who all contribute to the YOT’s ongoing effectiveness.”

Kath Tunstall

Strategic Director, Services to Children and Young People



Richard Bates (Assistant Director, Social Care - Children), Kath Tunstall and Paul O'Hara (Bradford YOT Manager)

“This is a very positive assessment of Bradford YOT. I have seen at close quarters the work they do with young offenders and young people at risk of offending and I am pleased the Inspection has recognised the quality of this work. I note the aspects of delivery which can be improved but congratulate the entire team on what they have achieved. It is of vital importance that every young person in Bradford is supported and guided to help them fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background. The YOT play a key role in this objective and I am grateful for their contribution. Reducing youth offending helps young people and improves the quality of life for the whole community.”

Cllr. Colin Gill

Bradford Council's Executive Member for Children's Services

The YOT's Partners

The Bradford YOT would like to thank its main partners and wider network of community-based partners for their ongoing support which has contributed to this very positive Inspection Report.

A full copy of the Inspection Report can be downloaded from the Bradford YOT website at: