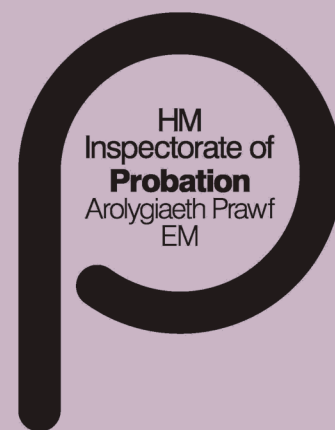




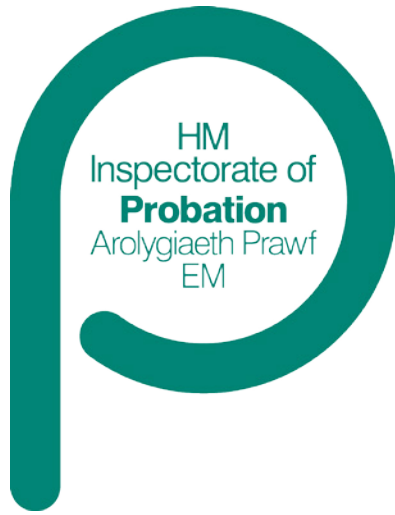
Independent Inspection of
Youth
Offending

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Core Case Inspection of youth offending work: in England and Wales

Report on London Core Case Inspections



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Contents

Contents	3
Introduction	4
Context setting	4
London	4
Demographic information	5
The basis of the London inspections	7
Inspection findings	8
Assessment	8
Planning	9
Interventions	11
Outcomes	12
Other issues and initiatives	13
Developing practice	15
Regional comparisons	16
Feedback from children and young people and victims	16
Health service contributions to Youth Offending Teams	16
Conclusions and future actions	17
Recommendations	19
<i>Appendix 1 – Inspection arrangements</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Appendix 2 – Glossary</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Appendix 3 – Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice</i>	<i>22</i>

Foreword

Having completed our Core Case Inspection programme of Youth Offending Teams in August 2012, we decided, in addition to a report on the aggregated findings from the inspections, also to publish this report on the inspections in London. The inspections showed a wide range of performance in the London Youth Offending Teams. Some were achieving the highest results of any team in the country whereas others needed to make significant improvements in their performance and practice. Some were facing significant reductions in their resources and were in the process of restructuring at the time of our visit.

Our purpose in publishing this report is therefore two-fold. First of all, we are seeking to focus attention on the particular challenges faced by those working with children and young people who offend in London, challenges it must be acknowledged that we had seen elsewhere although not perhaps with the same level of intensity. Secondly, we want to stress the need for a coordinated approach to be maintained across the London boroughs.

Action is now being undertaken by the Youth Offending Teams themselves, the Youth Justice Board and ourselves to promote cross borough cooperation and improve the work with children and young people. We hope that the publication of this report will help to maintain that momentum.



Liz Calderbank

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

December 2012

Introduction

This report is based on our Core Case Inspections (CCIs) of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) in London undertaken between June and December 2011. Its purpose is to provide an overview of the work we saw to address youth offending in London, as identified through the inspection process.

Context setting

The CCI programme covered a three-year period from April 2009 to August 2012, in which time inspection teams visited all 158 YOTs in England and Wales. The main purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of work with children and young people who offend, against our published criteria in relation to assessment and planning, interventions and outcomes. We looked at work over the whole of the sentence, covering both community and custody elements. During the course of the inspection, we assessed 1,180 individual cases and talked to each of the case managers responsible for the supervision of the child or young person about what they have done and why. We focused on three elements of the YOT's work:

- ◆ how well the work is done to minimise the harm to others;
- ◆ how well the work safeguards that individual from harm; and
- ◆ whether the work reduces the likelihood of that young person offending again.

We broke this down into two areas: assessment and planning, and the delivery of interventions. We then, crucially, looked at the outcomes for young people and victims.

London

We were told by many people that "*London is different*" and needs to be considered a special case. We acknowledge that there are some features that are unique to the capital, the size of London, and the number of boroughs, mean that London YOTs operate in a different context to many of their colleagues elsewhere. Other relevant elements are the cultural mix and the seriousness of offending behaviour, some of which is postcode-related. In our experience, many of these issues can be found in other regions of England, but are present on a larger scale in London, possibly because of the density of population and the ease of movement across local authority boundaries, something which presents considerable challenges to those providing services.

The political context is also different. The Mayor's office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) already has a greater responsibility to determine how criminal justice is being delivered. The existence of the two police forces (City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service) and the high profile given to crime generally is significant. Some resources have been transferred from YOTs to the Mayor's office.

London is also complicated by the difficulties experienced by many public sector organisations in recruiting and retaining quality staff. As a result, many YOTs rely on agency staff, some of whom, as found during the inspections, were simply not capable of meeting the demands placed on them.

All of this speaks for the need of a coordinated and clearly led response across the capital and cooperation across borough boundaries.

A number of the YOTs we visited in London put forward a '*special case*' plea suggesting that

"the staff are really amazing when you need them. Being around positive people is also helpful – making mistakes is part of life, but learning from them is better. They taught me how to learn from my mistakes" **Kingston Upon Thames**

we should take into account the different contexts of each of the boroughs in how we judged the work. We considered these arguments carefully but rejected them. Although we acknowledge the different and difficult circumstances in which many YOT staff work across England and Wales, if we started to benchmark for each borough according to its various

issues, we would soon be accused of inconsistency. We also believe that young people are entitled to the same standard and quality of intervention, regardless of where they live. Similarly, communities deserve the best in terms of being protected from criminal behaviour. Whilst the benchmark for the quality of work was therefore the same across all of England and Wales we do, however, acknowledge the complexity of the combination of the issues in London, as outlined above.

Practice Example

Police officers seconded to the YOS monitored the Facebook pages of children and young people known to the YOS and YouTube videos put on the site by local gang members. This enabled YOS case managers to target their interventions more effectively and in turn share gang related intelligence with police colleagues. **Camden**

Demographic information

The London boroughs vary and all have their own characteristics. The contextual information, contained in each CCI report, covered three elements across England and Wales:

- ◆ 10-17 year old population (Census 2001). National average: 10.4%.
- ◆ Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (2009). National average: 12%.
- ◆ Reported offences for which children and young people aged 10-17 years old had received a pre-court or court disposal in 2009/2010. National average: 38.
- ◆ Deprivation indices: English Indices of Deprivation, 2010 n=326.

For the purposes of this report we have also added the individual deprivation indices (2010) for the London boroughs as these were put forward by a number of people as a possible explanation for the varying levels of performance in the respective YOTs.

The following table shows the differences between the London boroughs:

Youth Offending Area % indicates percentages above the National average	Population 10-17 years National average¹ 10.4%	Ethnicity Black and Minority Groups² National average 12%	Reported offences³: National average 38	Rank of the Deprivation Index
Barking & Dagenham	10.9%	27%	35	22
Barnet	9.8%	29%	20	176
Bexley	10.7%	15%	26	174
Brent	10.2%	52%	40	35
Bromley	9.7%	15%	27	203
Camden	7.5%	30%	40	72
Croydon	10.8%	32%	39	107
Ealing	9.7%	37%	28	80
Enfield	10.3%	28%	33	64
Greenwich	10.4%	26%	33	28
Hackney	10.7%	37%	47	2
Haringey	9.9%	34%	55	13
Harrow	10.9%	40%	22	194
Havering	10.3%	11%	31	177
Hillingdon	10.2%	25%	30	138
Hounslow	10.2%	35%	46	118
Islington	8.5%	25%	52	14
Kingston Upon Thames	9.1%	19%	35	255
Lambeth	8.6%	32%	49	29
Lewisham	9.7%	34%	44	31
Merton	8.9%	27%	41	208
Newham	12.9%	55%	57	3
Redbridge	10.6%	40%	29	134
Richmond-upon-Thames	8.1%	15%	15	285
Southwark	9%	34%	55	41
Sutton	10.1%	17%	35	196
Tower Hamlets & City of London	11.1% (4.1% City)	43% (18% City)	40	7
Waltham Forest	10.2%	38%	41	15
Wandsworth	6.5%	23%	61	121
West London Tri-borough:	Figures are only available on a borough basis			103
Hammersmith & Fulham	7.1%	24%	43	
Kensington & Chelsea	6.0%	26%	31	
Westminster	5.8%	31%	38	

Unfortunately, at the time of writing the Census results for 2011 were not yet available. However, the table illustrates the wide variation as it stood in 2001 – from a youth population of 5.8% in Kensington and Chelsea to over double that of 12.9% in Newham. The

¹ Census 2001

² This is a generic group across the whole population – we do not subset this to identify the breakdown within this category, and this may not directly represent the ethnicity of the young people.

³ Sourced from the YJB (<http://www.justice.gov.uk/youthjustice/monitoring-performance/workload-data>) under Offences resulting in a disposal, regionally-2009/2010

ethnic makeup also varies greatly – from 55% of Black and Minority Ethnic peoples in Newham, to 11% in Havering.

The third column, that of reported offences, suggests a wide variation in both practice and performance which requires further interpretation. Many YOTs have reported to us that as more children and young people are diverted from the formal criminal justice system (as demonstrated by the First Time Entrants - FTE) figures, those who then come into contact with the YOT tend to be the more serious offenders with more complex needs. These children often require more intensive interventions, and consequently more resources, to help them to stop offending.

"I haven't been out on the road so much anymore getting into trouble and I have been behaving more in school" Merton

In order to test any link between deprivation and performance (as measured by our inspection results) we ran a statistical test between each of the three headline scores (for the quality of work to: minimise the risk of harm to others, reduce the likelihood of reoffending and safeguard the child or young person) against the index of deprivation for the London boroughs. We found no correlation between the two.

Practice Example

Emma was convicted of racially aggravated threatening behaviour. A thorough assessment concluded that she had a number of inter-connected difficulties in relationships at home, school and with her associates. She was socialising with adults and was vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Much of her problematic behaviour was based on her poor self-esteem and the need to be approved of by her associates. She was referred to a girls programme run by the YOS appropriate to her needs but, although she attended the first group, she was not a willing or effective participant, as she felt too intimidated by the group setting. The case manager arranged for another female worker to deliver the programme to her on a one-to-one basis.

Barking and Dagenham

The basis of the London inspections

The 30 London YOTs were inspected between June and December 2011. A total of 1,180 cases were examined by HMI Probation; 27% of these assessments were undertaken by 'local assessors', experienced managers and practitioners from different YOTs specifically trained by HMI Probation to work as part of the inspection team. Of the cases we inspected:

"I've realised that there is no point wasting your life...make something while you still have it" Hounslow

- ◆ 15% were girls and young women (rest of England and Wales 15%)
- ◆ 54% were of Black and Minority Ethnic Origin (rest of England and Wales 12%)
- ◆ 16% had reported disabilities (rest of England and Wales 22%)
- ◆ 19% were Looked After Children (rest of England and Wales 19%).

Our inspection sample was selected randomly, with some small adjustments to ensure that we saw some of the more serious cases. The overall case sample for London reflected the national pattern of offending except that:

- ◆ 32% were for offences of violence (against 38% for England and Wales), and
- ◆ 21% were for robbery (against 6% for the rest).

The high proportion of robbery offences has resource implication for the YOTs.

Practice Example

Carl was subject to a youth rehabilitation order (YRO) for motoring offences and his mother was assessed to be in need of help in setting boundaries for Carl. A referral was made to the Family Intervention Project. The case worker conducted a home visit with the Family Intervention Project worker. A plan was drawn up where the work that the case manager undertook with Carl to challenge his thinking and behaviour was reinforced by work the project worker did with Carl's mother. Planning in this way meant that there was a clear direction established for the workers that focussed on providing clear boundaries for Carl, which would help reduce the likelihood of him reoffending.

Islington

Inspection findings

We found a mixed picture. Some London boroughs were performing significantly better than others, even when differences in population and deprivation were taken into account.

The high performing YOTs indicate that it is possible to achieve quality work despite challenging and complex issues, some of which, for example Camden, were among the best in England and Wales.

"I now take a step back before I do anything or say anything" Islington

Practice Example

Majeed received a 12 month detention and training order (part custodial part community sentence) for an offence of making threats to kill. While in custody he attended the Juvenile Enhanced Thinking Skills (JETS) programme which challenged his views about offending. Majeed participated fully and was assessed as having made significant progress. After his release his case manager set up a review meeting attended by Majeed, his parents, his keyworker from the prison and the police. At the meeting, Majeed was able to recognise the progress that he had made in custody and wanted this to continue in the community. The discussion at the meeting was used by the case manager to revise her plan for Majeed to include the delivery of an offending behaviour programme. Majeed made good progress, built on the work undertaken in custody and there had been no further offending.

Newham

Assessment

The work of YOTs needs to be seamless and take place both in the community and also in custody, especially when the young person is transferring between the two.

One of the most important things to do is to complete a timely, comprehensive and individualised assessment at the outset, as the reasons for offending are complex. This, with the help of the young person, and their parents/carers, should look behind the offence to try to answer the question 'why?' – why did *this* young person commit *this* offence at *this* time?

"she speaks to me and checks my understanding" **Greenwich**

A number of different matters should be covered by the assessment – for example, information about the young person's everyday life such as their family, school, activities, etc. as well as their offending history.

From the picture that then emerges, an analysis should be undertaken about whether they are a risk to others, how they can be kept safe and what can help them to stop offending. Children's lives can change very quickly so this assessment should be kept under regular review.

We found that although every YOT was undertaking the assessments, some were not started soon enough or took too long to complete and many were not of sufficient quality. This process is similar to visiting a doctor – if the initial diagnosis is incorrect it is unlikely to lead to a cure. So, the assessment needs to be as good as it can be in order for the work that follows to target the right areas. YOTs were going through the process, but many were not achieving an acceptable standard and only a few were producing quality work.

Practice Example

Dale was sentenced to a 12 month YRO for an assault of a pupil at the school he was attending. He had exhibited behavioural and anger management issues in mainstream education and had been removed from school. In the six months between the offence and the sentence he had not received any educational input. The case manager engaged well with Dale and included him and his mother in the sentence planning process. They identified objectives that were relevant and motivational for Dale. Dale wanted to become a mechanic and this framed the delivery of interventions. From early after his contact with the YOS, work was begun to enable Dale to access a place at a motor project. A marked improvement was noticed in Dale's behaviour in the vocational education setting. He was selected as one of two young people to meet members of the royal family to demonstrate the work of the project. With the support of education workers and the YOS case manager, Dale made significant progress towards his goal to become a mechanic and avoid further offending.

Havering

Sutton YOT involved children and young people and their parents/carers as well as a range of external agencies in order to be thorough in their assessments. Their speech and language therapist had adapted the national self-assessment tool (*What do YOU think?*) so that it was pictorial and hence more accessible to a wider range of children and young people and the team paid particular attention to different learning styles in their work.

Children and young people were thus encouraged to participate and feel involved. Seeing themselves as participants rather than recipients is more likely to result in success.

Planning

We expect to see a plan of work, based on the assessment, outlining the work to be undertaken to achieve in terms of stopping that young person from offending. The purpose of this plan is to coordinate and direct the work by different people involved with the young person and keep it on track.

Some YOTs did different aspects of this work very well. Merton and Barnet were good at engaging young people, Richmond-upon-Thames kept an outcome focus to their plans, and Waltham Forest sought goals that were achievable for both community and custody cases. In many other cases, while plans may have been done, they were not done in a way that the young person would understand (for example, the type of language used), or had goals that were too global rather than small achievable steps. Many of the young people who come into contact with YOTs will have failed in other aspects of their life. What they need to be able to see is that they are progressing. This is rather like a journey – looking for landmarks along the way to getting to your destination, to ensure you are taking the right route.

Where there are concerns about the harm that a young person may cause to others, a 'risk management plan' should be constructed to reduce the likelihood of harm happening by managing the risk. This work can be done directly with the young person, encouraging them to take responsibility themselves for their behaviour – such as working with them to reduce their alcohol consumption, or it can be imposed externally – for example, by limiting where they can go and what they can do.

"I was very satisfied with the agreement made at the end of the panel and would be happy to participate again. I was glad that the panel listened to me and I was part of the process where the young person who had offended against me agreed to repair the harm they had done" **victim, Camden**

We found in many areas that risk management plans were either not produced, or not good enough. Sometimes this was because case managers did not see the risk that the young person posed as serious and therefore did not see the need for a plan. It was sometimes not clear, where a plan was produced, who was responsible for doing what or how the risk really would be managed. Insufficient attention was paid to victims' safety, which was given priority in only 42% of the relevant cases we looked at in London. (Southwark was the exception in paying particular attention to the issue.). In some cases, the case was not properly investigated, because case managers had not followed up school behaviour or previous offences, or had not sought and received information from other agencies, such as the police or the NHS. Sometimes these were serious omissions.

Similarly, a 'vulnerability management plan' (to protect any child supervised by the YOT who may be subject to harm or danger) was either not completed, or not within a reasonable timescale, or the quality was not good enough. Again, sometimes the risks were not being seen, on other occasions the plan was not detailed or comprehensive enough. To put this in context of the risks that are posed to children who offend in London, we determined that the

need for a vulnerability management plan applied to 80% of the children in our sample in Lambeth and an average of 61% across the capital. This compared to 55% across the rest of England and Wales. While Lambeth figures were the highest end of the continuum, there is obviously considerable work to be done to protect children in London. Wandsworth had taken particular care to ensure the safety of their children in contact with the YOT.

None of these risks are not static – they change depending on circumstances and so need to be kept under regular review. Reviews were not done frequently enough, nor to a satisfactory standard in many cases.

Overall assessment

Area of work	England and Wales (rest)	London
Assessment & Planning	68%	63%

Practice Example
 Ben had a low IQ and suffered from separation anxiety if he had to leave his mother. Following a full initial assessment, the case manager referred his mother for parenting support and then helped Ben to learn the bus route from his home to the YOT. This gave them both confidence that he could get to the YOT independently and safely. As a result, he was able to undertake critical work to address his offending behaviour.
Tower Hamlets

Interventions

Once the case manager has identified what work is needed, they then have to decide how it is going to be provided.. We expect to see work delivered to effective practice principles – that it is appropriate to the individual and their previous offending (in terms of content, frequency etc) and is presented in a way that makes it most likely that it will be successful. These might be specific programmes that can, for example, help a young person act less impulsively, or involve arranging a mentor for a young person to help them look at constructive use of their spare time. It may be offered on a one-to-one basis or in groups, or involve working in partnership with other agencies such as health and education.

A number of YOTs did good work on interventions, but many, especially case managers delivering individual work, allowed themselves to be diverted by crises or other events in the young person’s life. Intervention work was consequently often ad hoc and reactive rather than planned and carefully sequenced. In some YOTs staff felt that they had not had enough training to run programmes properly.

There were exceptions: Sutton’s programmes were designed to reduce reoffending and were planned and sequenced well. Camden and Enfield were particularly good at their victim and safeguarding work, while Camden also delivered a number of programmes - both in a group and individually, that tackled offending

“I have been in a victim awareness programme and it has made me think about what I have done” **young person**
Tower Hamlets and City of London

behaviour, including evaluating their effectiveness. Barking and Dagenham had involved parents and carers, motivated young people and were well supported by other professionals in the borough.

Croydon provided young people with access to a range of interventions which included health pathways (e.g. sexual health), education, training and employment and accommodation issues as well, as did Hounslow where young people were motivated well to participate in interventions. Richmond-upon-Thames provided positive inter-agency work especially working with education, the youth service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and restorative justice. The West London Tri-borough also had quality interventions that incorporated diversity and were appropriately focused on offending.

Ealing made good use of a Summer Arts School, positive activities with good multi-agency work, while Lewisham also did some very positive joint work, especially with health practitioners. Further joint work, including substance misuse, pre-release and intensive surveillance and supervision (ISS), was done well in Tower Hamlets. Bexley and Harrow had introduced mentors to support learning and vulnerability which was working well and Islington were working well with the Family Intervention Project to promote young people's well-being in both custody and community. They also had some good work on referral orders where offending behaviour work was being carried out by specialist workers at regular advice/workshop sessions.

Richmond-upon-Thames had their interventions, such as victims, relationships, substance misuse and offending behaviour accredited by AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) Education (English Examination Board), which meant that young people completing the course could get some national recognition for the work they had done. Given that education is a protective factor in reducing the likelihood of a young person offending, this (in addition to the content of the course itself) may contribute to this goal.

Practice Example

Junior was 13 when he committed a robbery with other children and young people. Staff worked with him, his siblings and his mother to improve relationships at home and set agreements in place on chores and boundaries. The workers then did some very effective work on understanding the meaning of 'joint enterprise' and how Junior's co-defendant felt able to commit the offence because of his presence. Junior also attended the Young Men's group which used role plays and characterisation to look at alternative ways to respond to potential offending. The feedback from Junior indicated that this had had real impact on his thinking. This is likely to have reduced the likelihood of him offending in the future.

Hackney

In almost all areas, the frequency of home visits was low. As it is important to see the young person in their context, we see the reluctance to undertake home visits wherever possible as poor practice. Bromley was an exception to this where 86% of home visits were carried out, while overall in London, the frequency of home visits during the sentence took place in just over half the work inspected.

We expect managers to exert oversight over the work of their staff, but in many cases we found this was not happening to a sufficient extent. We saw structures set up to improve

practice – the establishment of case audit systems, complex case panels, risk and vulnerability management panels and multi-agency risk panels – these had the *potential* to improve practice but were not delivering. They tended to identify actions which needed to be taken, but did not ensure that these were then followed through.

Overall assessment

Area of work	England and Wales (rest)	London
Interventions	73%	67%

Outcomes

In considering whether work was effective in preventing further offending, we look at whether the young person has engaged and whether they have committed any further offences during the period of the YOT contact – in particular whether these have reduced in frequency and/or seriousness.

“YOT is like a second chance to me and it has given me the opportunity to get things right”
Wandsworth

Some areas, such as Brent, Haringey and Hillingdon, were able to demonstrate a high level of progress in particularly complex cases which was commendable. A number of YOTs were not, however, able to do this, often because their initial assessments were not sufficiently good to enable them to measure progress, identify goals and achieve results.

Richmond upon Thames had introduced links to the youth service in order to bridge the transition through reintegration into the community, while Ealing had mentoring, housing support and voluntary provision. Enfield had achieved the transition through helpful use of jobs and college placements.

Haringey had also initiated successful compliance meetings to re-engage those young people less willing to cooperate and Croydon had a good record of taking enforcement action where young people, had not complied with their orders.

Overall assessment

Area of work	England and Wales (rest)	London
Outcomes	68%	64%

Practice Example

Jack was subject to a custodial sentence for an offence of Robbery. He was in the 'deter young offender' (DYO) cohort. The local arrangements for this meant that the YJS link officer had knowledge of the case and would feed back issues to the DYO meeting. The DYO team were able to share intelligence and jointly plan for managing reoffending issues. When Jack was involved in an incident in custody this was reported to the DYO meeting. Due to the broader intelligence available in this case, the DYO team were able to link this incident to a stabbing in the community. The YJS reassessed the level of Jack's involvement in violent activity, his likelihood of reoffending and risk of causing harm to others. This also resulted in a reassessment of his vulnerability. Subsequently, new risk and vulnerability plans were produced. The DYO police officer attended the final custodial review with the YJS worker. Jack was informed that he was in the DYO cohort and what this meant for him in terms of the additional support that was on offer. He also knew that his likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm were being monitored jointly by the YJS and the police.

Redbridge

Other issues and initiatives

Other linked issues are worth a mention.

Serious youth violence

A number of YOTs in London have young people involved in serious youth violence – often gangs which they have to deal with on both a strategic and day to day basis. Many staff had a good understanding of gang issues on the ground (such as Redbridge) and made arrangements to prevent local violence, such as in Camden where their court lists were checked for gang members and action taken if rivals were listed together. But, in our view and judging against a national benchmark, a significant number of staff did not realise the extent of the vulnerability of the young person or the risk of harm they might pose to others, so often did not address these issues in either their assessments or plans.

It was clear from looking at a number of cases that work on gang issues required a high level multi-agency response – tackling the issue from all angles and across boroughs. This was difficult work and sometimes resulted in whole families being moved out of the area. Some boroughs were alert to the issues while others were just beginning to realise their significance. This is a particularly sensitive political issue with some areas not wanting to admit or see that they had an emerging problem. The issue is highly demanding for staff too – emotionally charged, exhausting and with high stakes – the risk of a young person being killed or killing someone else may be a regular feature of their day to day work. While the inspection did not specifically examine this, in our view there should be more recognition and support for staff dealing with these issues – both in training, managerial accountability and support, workload recognition and in some cases specific clinical supervision.

Summer of 2011 – civil unrest

The summer of 2011 saw civil unrest in London and other major cities. Some inspections were completed before the disturbances started in August, but others took place after – such as Haringey where the damage to the YOT premises resulted in the team having to be relocated. The YOTs were impressive in their response and worked hard to not let the unrest impact on their day to day business. Some worked to deter the young people on their caseloads from involvement in the disturbances – for example Camden attempted to contact all the young people known to them and talked to them until the small hours of the morning, about the implications of participating; others organised activities and events to detract young people from taking part. Court workers also supported overnight court hearings and other work that took them away from their other core business.

One young person said YJS staff had "visited my home when I felt in danger at the YOT"
Southwark

Workforce planning and resourcing

We inspected YOTs in London at a time when they were restructuring as a result of considerable cuts or uncertainty about funding. While we generally found committed and enthusiastic staff, a number of issues caused us concern. In a few boroughs we found long-term vacancies, staff absence not covered in any way, whereas others placed what we considered to be an over-reliance on temporary 'agency staff' to meet the demands of the workload. Although some of these staff provided an excellent level of service, overall, their performance level varied and many did not meet the standard of work required. The same criticism can be made about both staff and managerial posts, as well as specialist ones, such as health or education and was a particular problem in London. We have seen it elsewhere but not to the same extent.

Interestingly though, we did not find resourcing of the work with individual cases a problem and assessed that in 81% of the work, resources had been appropriately allocated. This may have been a timing issue as when undertaking our assessments we looked back for up to 12 months in individual cases, possibly at a point before cuts in funding had taken effect.

The lack of high quality oversight of all staff also impacted on the quality of work that some agency staff produced too.

Transfers across boroughs

A number of boroughs experienced a high number of transfers in and out of their area. We found that the quality of transfer-in work was poor and caused friction between YOTs – sometimes this was rectified in the host YOT sometimes not. Often, it was difficult to get full information, despite many attempts on behalf of the case manager to secure the information. Few cases were referred to managers often, we felt, because of a tacit acceptance by the case managers that little could be done to address the situation.

While there is an existing Youth Justice Board (YJB) protocol (offering practice advice to promote consistency) about the transfer of cases, we would like to see greater cooperation between YOTs across London to ensure that case recording is fully up to date, that cases are transferred in a timely manner and that where possible proper transfer meetings take place.

Practice Example

Peter was subject to a youth rehabilitation order (YRO) for the offence of attempted robbery. There were concerns of possible gang affiliation and police intelligence to suggest the possible carrying of weapons. Peter completed the knife possession prevention programme early in his order. As supervision continued the case manager came to realise that he had personal skills in communication, planning and in particular media and performing arts. They linked Peter with a project which was developing a knife and weapons programme for young people in the area at the point of school transition from primary to high school. Peter became involved in this project as part of the young people's consultation group and was now planning to use his skills and experiences to deliver the programme in schools within the borough.

Lambeth

Developing practice

A couple of initiatives we felt deserved a mention are:

***'Young Hackney'* a model of services around the child**

Young Hackney was an integrated children and young people centred service which enabled children and young people who had offended to access the services they needed in a manner that engaged them and their families, a systems approach had been implemented. *Young Hackney* Units were small, self-directed, multi-skilled work teams that brought together the skills and competencies of the Youth Service, Youth Support and the Youth Offending Team. They were responsible for delivering a range of universal provision, as well as individual and family support.

At the time of the inspection *'Young Hackney'* was in its infancy but the approach looked promising.

West London Tri-borough initiative

West London Tri-borough YOS came into being in January 2012 with the merger of the youth offending services of Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea. The three YOTs had a history of collaborative working through the delivery of Intensive Surveillance and Supervision and shared training programmes. The new service is headed by a single strategic lead manager. Court services and some specialist roles are combined and each borough retains a locally based team with a reporting centre for children and young people.

Regional comparisons

The table below indicates the headline scores for each of the English regions and Wales against the same scores for London:

Area of work	England and Wales (rest)	London
Safeguarding	69%	64%
Risk of harm to others	64%	57%
Likelihood of Reoffending	72%	68%
Number of cases in sample	6,330	1,180

The above table indicates the differences in performance between London and the rest of England and Wales. This suggests that the quality of all work in London overall is below the average for the rest of England and Wales.

Feedback from children and young people and victims

Part of our inspections include a questionnaire for children and young people. In London,

- ◆ 64% of young people felt that they were a *"not less likely"* to reoffend as a result of their work with the YOT (rest of England and Wales 67%)
- ◆ 97% knew why they had come to the YOT (rest of England and Wales 98%)
- ◆ 87% of the young people stated they were satisfied with the YOT service (rest of England and Wales 79%)

Of the victim feedback – 178 questionnaires were completed. Of those, 86% reported they were given an opportunity to discuss any concerns (rest of England and Wales 92%) and 81% said they were satisfied with the service (rest of England and Wales 87%).

One young person stated that their YJS worker "explains things very well and has pictures that make it easier for me to understand the task" Ealing

Practice Example
 A young man was sentenced to custody. Following an accurate assessment of the case, the case worker wrote to him to motivate him to undertake work whilst in custody and explaining what the YOS would do to support him when he was released. The young man found this very helpful and once released, worked well with the worker to look at the reasons that had caused him to offend, including work with the YOS police officer exploring his attitude and views towards the police.
Barnet

Health service contributions to Youth Offending Teams

A limited number of inspections of health services within YOTs were also carried out in the London region by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). These inspections were complementary to those carried out by HMI Probation and followed up on recommendations made in the joint CQC and HMI Probation review report (*Actions Speak Louder: A second review of healthcare in the community for young people who offend*) while also linking directly to health regulatory standards. Findings from these inspections demonstrated wider variations than any other region which was inspected in this cycle by CQC. Health attendance at YOT management board meetings, for example, averaged 57% but this ranged from 0%-100%. Equally, the average contribution to the YOT budget by health services had grown to 5.17% but this masked the considerable differences between London YOTs from a nil or negligible amount to those that were much better resourced.

The most significant general health-related issues for some YOTs in this region included the need to:

- ◆ clarify representation and commissioning arrangements on YOT management boards;
- ◆ collate and evaluate the impact of health interventions;
- ◆ improve transitional arrangements for health between community and secure settings;
- ◆ identify and meet physical health needs more effectively; and
- ◆ ensure that appropriate health and other YOT information was adequately shared.

Emotional and mental health and substance misuse needs were fully considered in the majority of initial assessments despite one inspected substance misuse service not employing any screening tools to support their assessments, referrals and interventions. The variety of health interventions and methods had improved and practices to increase engagement were mostly in place with service users having greater involvement in both assessments and the development of health plans. Monitoring tools and outcome measures had grown but were mainly focused on individuals rather than being aggregated and linked to other YOT outcome measures.

One final aspect which was clear in the London region was the level of anxiety expressed about further health commissioning changes and the impact this may have on health's future resourcing of, and participation in, YOTs. The impact of these changes should be closely monitored.

Conclusions and future action

During the course of the inspection, we met with representatives from different YOTs, local authorities and the Association of the Directors of Children's Services Ltd (ADCS) to discuss a number of concerns arising from the process. Some of the discussions related to the inspection methodology and we have not only dealt with them in our meetings with individual YOTs and the ADCS inspection sub-group but also used them to inform the development of our new inspection methodology. Others centred on how the findings were presented in reports and their potential impact on community perceptions. Again, we have addressed a number of these issues in our new programme, including how our findings are presented to the public. While we believe strongly that such findings should be made available to the local community, we are sensitive to issues about the fear of crime. As a result of contact made with individual YOTs, our press officer worked closely with the local

authority press departments to ensure that our messages, however critical, were placed in an appropriate context.

We have also worked with the YJB in taking part in a sector led improvement conference in March 2012, sponsored by the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) and London Councils.

The YJB are involved in a number of initiatives to promote improvement – 'Inset Training' (pan London sector led and funded programme for Youth Justice Services), an effective practice forum (peer support and practice improvement) and work with individual YOTs. HMI Probation also plans to deliver a number of benchmarking workshops early in 2013. We wait with interest to see how these initiatives, plus work done by YOTs themselves, impact on performance.

We have met with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to deliver a presentation on our findings in London and have discussed setting up a regular discourse with them.

We will continue to have regular meetings with the YJB Head of Business Area and their team to discuss London findings. Some boroughs in London will receive a further inspection in due course.

Recommendations

In addition to the health-related issues identified above, we propose that:

1. YOTs *work together* to improve practice across the capital with particular reference to:
 - ◆ the quality of assessments and planning
 - ◆ delivering high quality interventions
 - ◆ protecting the public (assessment and management of risk of harm to others)
 - ◆ protecting children and young people (assessment and management of their vulnerability).(YJB London Business Area and MOPAC)
2. YOTs use the recommendations from thematic inspection reports as a benchmark to assess and improve practice on particular elements of their work (YOT Heads of Service)
3. YOTs work together to improve information exchange and the quality of work relating to children and young people transferring in and out of boroughs (YJB and YOT Heads of Service)
4. In addition to those areas above, the YJB continues to work with YOTs to identify and subsequently deliver support to achieve improvement across the capital.

Appendix 1

Inspection Arrangements

Model

The Core Case Inspection (CCI) involved visits to all 158 YOTs in England and Wales over a three-year period from April 2009. Its primary purpose was to assess the quality of work with children and young people who had offended, against HMI Probation's published criteria, in relation to assessment and planning, interventions and outcomes. We looked at work over the whole of the sentence, covering both community and custody elements.

Methodology

The focus of our inspection was the quality of work undertaken with children and young people who offend, whoever was delivering it. We looked at a representative sample of between 38 and 99 individual cases up to 12 months old, some current others terminated. These were made up of first tier cases (referral orders, action plans and reparation orders), youth rehabilitation orders (mainly those with supervision requirements), detention and training orders and other custodial sentences. The sample sought to reflect the make up of the whole caseload and included a number of those who were a high *risk of harm to others*, young women and black and minority ethnic children and young people. Cases were assessed by a small team of inspection staff with local assessors (peer assessors from another YOT in the region). They conducted interviews with case managers who were invited to discuss the work with that individual in depth and were asked to explain their thinking and to show where to find supporting evidence in the record. These case assessments were the primary source of evidence for the CCI.

Prior to the inspection we received copies of relevant local documents and a brief report from the YJB. We also gathered the views of service users (children and young people and victims) by means of computer and paper questionnaires.

Appendix 2

Glossary

ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd
ALDCS	Association of London Directors of Children's Services
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CCI	Core Case Inspection
CQC	Care Quality Commission
DYO	Deter young offender
FTE	First time entrants
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
ISS	Intensive surveillance and supervision
JETS	Juvenile enhanced thinking skills
MOPAC	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
Safeguarding	The ability to demonstrate that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child or young person coming to harm
YJB	Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
YOT/YOS/YJS	Youth Offending Team/Youth Offending Service/Youth Justice Service
YRO	Youth rehabilitation order

Appendix 3

Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice

Information on the Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice can be found on our website:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmi-probation/>

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:

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