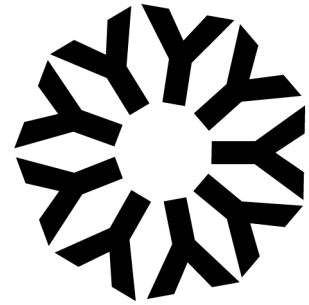


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Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Teams of England and Wales

Report on:
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin
Youth Offending Service

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2008

Foreword

The inspection of the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin YOS took place in the fourth phase of our YOS 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 contributed to the latter two inspections.

Significant changes had been implemented in the YOS in the period leading up to the inspection. These were far-reaching and included changes to the governance, management and processes of the organisation. The service had seen its performance steadily improve over time and the introduction of the 'risk led approach' helped to ensure that resources were targeted on Risk of Harm, likelihood of reoffending and safeguarding issues.

The YOS had an underdeveloped approach to capturing and using information on the impact of its work with service users to inform future developments in the organisation.

We found an organisational culture that focused on effective engagement with children and young people. The Board, managers and staff were keen to develop further their services by addressing the recommendations in this report. The Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin YOS had established a strong platform of service delivery and we are confident it will continue to build upon this into the future.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

July 2008

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Glossary

Asset	Assessment tool developed by the Youth Justice Board
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CPF	Case Planning Forum
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DTO	Detention and training order
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
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
LoR	Likelihood of reoffending
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MAPP	Multi-Agency Public Protection
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MAPPP	Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel
NHS	National Health Service
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
Onset	YJB tool for assessing children and young people at risk of offending
PA	Personal advisor
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PPO	Prolific and other Priority Offender
PSR	Pre-sentence report
RoH	Risk of Harm
RoSH	Risk of Serious Harm
SQUIFA	Screening Questionnaire Interview for Adolescents (Youth Justice Board approved mental health screening tool for YOS workers)
TAC	Team Around the Child
YISP	Youth Inclusion Support Panel
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOI	Young Offenders Institution
YOIS	Youth Offending Information System
YOS/T	Youth Offending Service/Team
YSS	Youth Support Services

Summary

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

Work in the courts

- ◆ The YOS had staff who undertook specific court roles using its clearly defined court procedures. Two experienced staff members acted as mentors to new staff and students.
- ◆ Pre-sentence report writers proof-read reports and passed them to their relevant manager for a further review. All reports were checked by court staff before being presented to the court.
- ◆ In all the cases seen in the inspection pre-sentence reports differentiated between the likelihood of reoffending and the Risk of Harm to others.

Work with children and young people in the community

- ◆ Both local authorities were 'trailblazers' and held beacon status in developing integrated children's services in line with the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.
- ◆ The Youth Inclusion Support Panel linked to the Common Assessment Framework, the Team Around the Child and lead professional model.
- ◆ In the three years preceding the inspection, the YOS had developed a 'risk led approach'. This helped to ensure that resources were targeted at children and young people with the highest Risk of Harm, likelihood of reoffending and safeguarding concerns.
- ◆ Employment, training and education staff were notified of all children and young people not in full-time provision. They liaised with key employment, training and education stakeholders on behalf of the YOS, with the aim of achieving alternative education provision for individual children and young people.
- ◆ Over three-quarters of cases had evidence that the active engagement of parents/carers had been facilitated by the work of the YOS.
- ◆ Progress against the first priority criminogenic factor was noted in 70% of cases involving children and young people who had offended.
- ◆ Few Risk of Harm assessments addressed victims' issues.
- ◆ Records did not adequately address safeguarding work in almost half of the relevant cases.

Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences

- ◆ In three-quarters of the relevant cases the link social worker attended the final review meeting in the secure establishment. Vulnerability action plans had been completed in the same proportion of cases.
- ◆ Effective action on compliance had been taken in two-thirds of cases.
- ◆ Three-quarters of cases showed that the learning outcomes achieved by the children and young people had been applied in their daily lives.
- ◆ Few cases could show that the 'escalation' processes, in which staff brought to the attention of managers problems in accessing relevant health or

education services, had helped practitioners to access the required resources.

Victims and restorative justice

- ◇ A comprehensive restorative justice strategy and a clear action plan were evident. The YOS's performance in this area compared favourably with its YJB defined family and the West Midlands area as a whole.
- ◇ Children and young people subject to final warnings, who were not offered an intervention programme, were asked to write a letter of apology/explanation where appropriate.
- ◇ Almost all of the cases had evidence to show that victims' needs had been sufficiently assessed.
- ◇ Whilst the numbers had been increasing, at the time of the inspection only half of the cases showed that children and young people had been involved in reparation work.

Management and leadership

- ◇ The YOS had adapted to the differing needs of the two local authorities to ensure that services were provided through locally available structures.
- ◇ Performance was monitored by exception reporting. Action plans were driven by the performance manager through reports to team managers. Disaggregated reports to the two individual authorities were provided and performance information was shared with the whole staff group.
- ◇ YOS staff used the Common Assessment Framework to collect and share information and the Team Around the Child to enable staff to work in partnership.
- ◇ The 'risk led approach' helped the YOS to focus on Risk of Harm, likelihood of offending and safeguarding. Through restructuring the service and the introduction of risk led national standards, the YOS had organised itself on the principle of resources following risk.
- ◇ YOS staff received regular supervision. All managers had undertaken an effective supervision course and had completed all the essential corporate management training.
- ◇ There was insufficient evidence of outcome data being used to drive forward developments in the organisation. The YOS was not confident about the accuracy of first-time entrants and reoffending rate data.
- ◇ The financial contribution of the National Health Service Trusts did not meet the Youth Justice Board guidance, and formal agreements between the YOS and health services did not encompass the comprehensive provision of physical and mental health services.

Recommendations

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

- (1) all Risk of Harm assessments adequately address victims' issues (*YOS manager*)
- (2) information on safeguarding interventions is recorded and accessible in all relevant cases (*YOS manager*)
- (3) both the police and YOS systems make available accurate and timely data on first-time entrants and reoffending rates (*Chair of the YOS Management Board*)
- (4) the YOS routinely reports on the outcomes from its work with service users and uses this information to inform service improvements (*Chair of the YOS Management Board*)
- (5) the commissioning and provision of health resources for the YOS encompass the comprehensive health needs of children and young people (*Chair of the YOS Management Board*).

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

Twenty-eight children and young people completed a questionnaire for the inspection, either on paper, or via an electronic questionnaire or during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ All the respondents reported that YOS staff had helped them to understand the requirements of their supervision and how to make best use of contact with the YOS.
- ◇ They were clear about the consequences of not keeping appointments.
- ◇ Almost all felt that the staff were interested in their case and that things had improved for them as a consequence of work done with the YOS.
- ◇ Five of the respondents had things in their lives that had made them feel afraid for their safety and all said that the YOS had helped them to address those issues.
- ◇ Most said that they felt they had been treated fairly.
- ◇ Over three-quarters said that they were less likely to offend as a result of the work they had done with the YOS, although one said *"Instead of staying in and doing meetings they could go out more. To show you are being punished, but it can be fun as well"*.

Two interviews were conducted with children and young people in custody. One was remanded in custody and the other was sentenced.

- ◇ Those interviewed from HMYOI Stoke Heath were located within an hour's drive from the YOS.
- ◇ Both said that they had been seen by a YOS member of staff at the point of sentence and both had had contact with their case responsible officers whilst they were in custody.
- ◇ They felt that they had been treated fairly and with respect.
- ◇ One said he had waited for two hours to see the worker on one occasion but the worker did not come. The other said he had had regular monthly contact with the worker.

Parents/carers

Nineteen questionnaires were completed by parents/carers during an interview with an inspector.

- ◇ All the respondents reported that the initial contact from the YOS had been helpful and that they had been kept informed by staff of the work that was being done with their children.
- ◇ Two-thirds had been offered a service in respect of parenting issues.
- ◇ Over three-quarters said that things had improved for themselves and for their children as a consequence of work done with the YOS.
- ◇ A quarter of the respondents said that they were reasonably satisfied, and three-quarters were completely satisfied with the service they had received. One said *"The YOS worker was great and I am completely happy with the service. At the beginning I was resistant to accepting help but the YOS worker was very supportive and I became confident of her. My son spoke highly of her too"*. Another parent said *"They need to step in quicker; I have been crying out since she was 11! All I received was threats because she wouldn't go to school"*.

Victims

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

- ◇ Five of the six respondents said that they had found the information provided by the YOS on the service they could expect to receive helpful. The same number valued the information that they had been given on sentences and what they meant for the children and young people who had offended.
- ◇ Five of the six said the safety of the victim had been addressed.
- ◇ Almost all of the respondents were satisfied with the service that they had received from the YOS. They had been treated fairly and valued their contact with YOS staff. One said *"I am very happy with the service received and would like to comment on the reassuring manner of the victim worker"*.

Sharing good practice

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

Work in the courts

General criterion: 1.2

Pauline was a Looked After Child who was subject to a reparation order. A close working relationship with the care home staff was developed and used to support her when she disclosed previous sexual abuse. Both care home and YOS staff accompanied Pauline to court and helped to broker creative approaches to meeting her needs and discharging the responsibilities of her order.

Work with children and young people at risk of offending

General criterion: 2.1

The prevention projects in operation across the area were established with multi-agency information sharing and assessment processes at their core. The YISP projects in Shropshire and Telford provided a locally-based multi-agency response to children and young people who were considered to be at risk of offending. Thus, the CAF and the TAC became the multi-agency vehicles for determining which services were needed, and for putting early identification processes as close as possible to the point of need. To facilitate the delivery of YISP services, a worker was located in each of the five school and community clusters in Telford, and each of the five multi-agency teams in Shropshire. In locating the YISP workers in each of these key locations, greater inter-agency cooperation and better coordination of resources were achieved.

Work with children and young people at risk of offending

General criterion: 2.1

All offences of a sexual nature were referred to the NSPCC's Sexual Harmful Behaviour Unit for Intervention, irrespective of the child or young person's total Asset score. For example: Steve was referred to the YOS for a final warning having committed a sexual offence. His Asset score was 6 and he did not reach the threshold for YOS intervention. However, he was referred to the NSPCC for an intervention due to the nature of the offence. He successfully participated in several months of work with them.

Work with children and young people who have offended

**General criterion:
2.5**

The YOS deputy manager was a member of the West Mercia Regional MAPPP Strategic Management Board. To ensure consistency across the service with regards to the identification of MAPP, risk assessment and risk management issues, the high-risk team's operations manager had responsibility for all MAPP operational matters. She attended the MAPPP Level 3 meetings to discuss all MAPP eligible children and young people open to the YOS and ensured that they were clearly identified as such on YOIS. All MAPP eligible children and young people were managed within the high-risk team regardless of their risk level. Assessments on these were reviewed on a monthly basis and, if necessary, the cases were referred to the MAPP regional coordinator to be listed at a Level 2 or 3 meeting for multi-agency consideration. The operations manager reported to the regional MAPP coordinator on a monthly basis, giving details of all those eligible for MAPPA – the data were combined with police records to ensure that information was held centrally on all MAPP eligible children and young people, regardless of their MAPP risk management level.

Work with parents/carers

**General criterion:
2.9**

An example of effective multi-agency work, in respect of work with parents/carers, was seen in the case of Paul. The TAC model was used to bring together Paul's parents, education and health services and YOS staff. A parenting service was offered and this enabled the parents to deal better with Paul's behaviour difficulties. The school reported positive progress by him and he showed he was able to apply the strategies he had learned to more appropriately deal with feelings of anger.

Management and leadership

**General criterion:
5.2**

An example of effective partnership work was seen in the case of Lucy. She was referred to the YOS having stolen money from her mother. During the Asset assessment it became apparent that Lucy was offending to fund her cannabis and alcohol use as well as her lifestyle in general. Lucy did not qualify for an intervention as part of a final warning as she did not meet the YOS intervention threshold, which was 20 at the time. However, there was an obvious need for work to be done in relation to substance misuse and Lucy was referred to 'Revolution' (a multi-agency team that provides targeted youth support within the local community of Telford) where she received the appropriate intervention and support from a specialist substance use worker.

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.

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin YOS had an assessment team within which court services were located. Dedicated court staff, led by a senior practitioner, provided court services for Shrewsbury, Telford and Ludlow Courts. In addition, the YOS provided a service to Shrewsbury Crown Court.

Strengths:

- (1) Responsibility for the YOS bail and remand strategy passed to the assessment team in 2006 and the court officers were trained to undertake bail assessments for children and young people who were at risk of remand into custody.
- (2) Arrangements were in place by which the police or the emergency duty team notified the YOS of any overnight arrests. The courts advised the YOS of any additional court listings not on the standard court list. The relationships between court staff, the police and the courts ensured that this process worked effectively and enabled the YOS to prepare for cases where there was a risk of secure or custodial remand.
- (3) The service approach was that a bail Asset was to be completed in all cases, along with a full RoH assessment, to help to ensure that bail and remand cases were integrated into the 'risk led approach'.
- (4) High RoH bail or remand cases were reviewed at the YOS CPF in order that consideration of the issues by all relevant staff could be undertaken.
- (5) All relevant paperwork was sent to custodial establishments by secure email wherever possible pending the introduction of the 'Wiring Up Youth Justice' system.
- (6) The YOS had an up-to-date remand management strategy which included arrangements for overnight notification of all children and young people who were at risk of secure/custodial remand.
- (7) There were few children and young people subject to secure custodial remands in the area. There had been less than 20 per year for the last three years.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) The YOS recognised that further work was required to ensure that children and young people were not remanded into custody because of a lack of suitable accommodation. The YOS manager was working in partnership with the local authorities to look at the possibility of establishing remand fostering.
- (2) A lack of accommodation provision for vulnerable girls and young women had been identified by the YOS as problematic and there was the potential for some of them to experience custody partially 'for their own safety'.

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 YOS.

Strengths:

- (1) Experienced and knowledgeable YOS staff undertook specific court roles using its clearly defined court procedures. Two experienced staff members acted as mentors to new staff and students.
- (2) The YOS was represented at Youth Court User Groups, magistrates' training events and LCJB meetings. The court senior practitioner also liaised with the local Crown Court judges and attended Crown Court user meetings.
- (3) Opportunities to meet with local sentencers had been actively sought by the YOS, e.g. the recent magistrates' events to launch the YJB Scaled Approach.
- (4) Out-of-hours services, including overnight arrests and Saturday and bank holiday courts, were covered by emergency duty teams in both authorities.
- (5) Joint work between the YOS and the local courts was underpinned by a partnership protocol which had recently been updated.
- (6) Over three-quarters of PSRs had evidence of liaison between the YOS and children's services staff.
- (7) The YOS coordinated the provision of Appropriate Adult volunteers via YSS – a local voluntary organisation.
- (8) Sentencers reported being well informed about developments in the YOS and had had opportunities to discuss issues of joint concern, e.g. briefings on the YJB 'Risk led' pilot in operation in the YOS.
- (9) Almost all of the PSRs followed the nationally approved format and were prepared within the national standards timescales and almost all were based on an Asset.

- (10) PSR writers proof-read reports and passed them to their relevant manager for a further review. All reports were checked by the YOS court staff before being presented to the court.
- (11) The inspection found that a community disposal had been proposed in almost all PSRs and that the courts followed more than half of these proposals. Almost all of the proposals that were not followed were because a custodial sentence was imposed.
- (12) A Post Custody Panel was held in all relevant cases. This looked at remands and custodial sentences with a view to learning lessons that could contribute to service improvement.
- (13) All the PSRs were based on at least one interview with the child or young person and almost all involved an interview with the parents/carers.
- (14) Evidence of liaison with children's services was seen in three-quarters of PSRs.
- (15) Three-quarters of PSRs included an analysis of the offence and they differentiated between the LoR and the RoH to others in all the cases seen in the inspection.
- (16) An assessment of the child or young person's level of maturity and their ability to understand the seriousness and consequences of their offence was seen in almost all PSRs.
- (17) The vulnerability issues that applied to the child or young person were addressed in almost all PSRs.
- (18) Almost all of the PSRs prepared on PPOs clearly outlined the seriousness of the offence and the LoR.
- (19) In over three-quarters of cases the children and young people, along with their parents/carers, were given a copy of the PSR and had had an opportunity to discuss its contents prior to the court hearing.
- (20) Over three-quarters of PSRs outlined the potentially adverse impact of custody on the child or young person.
- (21) Diversity issues were addressed in over three-quarters of PSRs.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Recent court feedback suggested that out-of-hours court cover arrangements did not meet the quality and consistency of the core provision.
- (2) The YOS did not have a well-developed process to ensure that sentencers received requested progress reports.

- (3) Under half of the PSRs included appropriate victim information and contained an account of victims' wishes in relation to their engagement with restorative justice processes.

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

There were two YISP projects, one in Telford and the other in Shropshire. These projects were delivered through partnerships with the local authorities. They were jointly funded by children's services departments and the YJB prevention grant. The YOS youth crime prevention manager had strategic oversight of the service.

Strengths:

- (1) The prevention strategy embraced several agendas which combined to create a broad-based approach to preventing children and young people from becoming involved in antisocial and offending behaviour. These strands included: a parenting strategy, two YISP projects and the Prevent and Deter strand of the PPO strategy.
- (2) YISP was located within multi-agency teams within the community thus promoting accessibility and effective joint work. The Borough of Telford and Wrekin had taken an 'in-house' approach and Shropshire County Council had contracted an external service provider to deliver its project.
- (3) Both local authorities had well-established arrangements for early intervention which enabled the delivery of the Respect agenda and the Prevent and Deter strategy.
- (4) Referrals for YISP projects were received from all partner agencies, children and young people and families themselves.
- (5) A wide range of interventions was available including the use of restorative processes.
- (6) Parenting services were delivered in conjunction with a voluntary agency.
- (7) All the cases seen in the inspection had a clear referral which was linked to the criteria for the service.

- (8) An Onset assessment was fully completed, to a good standard, in over three-quarters of the prevention cases. Assessments drew on a range of sources including self-assessments.
- (9) Race and ethnicity information was clearly recorded in all the cases. Diversity had been assessed at an early stage, and plans had been put in place to address identified diversity issues.
- (10) In almost all cases the inspection found evidence of parental involvement at the assessment stage and ongoing contact thereafter.
- (11) Almost all the cases had an accurate screening of RoH and all had the correct classification of RoSH.
- (12) Evidence of regular home visits was seen in almost all of the cases.
- (13) In almost all of the cases a timely and good quality intervention plan had been produced. These were found to be sensitive to diversity issues.
- (14) Three-quarters of cases had a time limited intervention plan and two-thirds a clear exit strategy.
- (15) Progress against objectives was reviewed in almost all of the cases and these routinely involved a review of Onset.
- (16) There was positive, proactive and timely joint working between the YOS and local children's services and relevant others. All the cases seen had evidence of ongoing joint work between the YOS staff and those from other organisations.
- (17) YOS staff demonstrated commitment to the work with children and young people in all of the cases.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Children and young people and their parents/carers had signed the intervention plans in only half of the cases.

2.2 General criterion:

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

The YOS was served by Telford and Wrekin NHS PCT provider arm who was jointly commissioned by Telford and Wrekin PCT and Shropshire County PCT. The YISP had access to the primary mental health workers in multi-agency teams and clusters.

Strengths:

- (1) Children, young people and their parents/carers were encouraged to complete consent forms in relation to sharing information with health professionals.
- (2) In all four relevant preventative cases there was evidence to show that children and young people had been helped to access health services.
- (3) YISP workers accessed health services via the local multi-agency teams or clusters.

2.3 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) Both authorities were 'trailblazers' and held beacon status in developing integrated children's services in line with the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. They had worked to achieve a single model of early assessment. The YISP project linked to the CAF, the TAC and lead professional model.
- (2) Almost all of the cases showed that the YOS had checked the status of the case with the children's services department.
- (3) Over three-quarters of cases had evidence that action taken in respect of vulnerability issues was appropriate.

2.4 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) Education interventions were delivered by schools and the children and young people were supported to remain in full-time education.
- (2) All four relevant cases had evidence of the child or young person being supported in accessing the required services.
- (3) One case required action to support a child or young person excluded from school to be reintegrated into mainstream education. This was done.

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

Work with children and young people who have offended

2.5 General criterion:

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

YOS arrangements for the supervision of children and young people who had offended were organised through a 'risk led approach' to the delivery of services across the county. The high-risk team was responsible for the delivery of interventions to all children and young people assessed as high risk of causing harm, or of reoffending or where there were safeguarding concerns. This applied across the two local authorities. The intermediate team delivered interventions to those assessed as low and medium risk of causing harm, or of reoffending or having lesser safeguarding concerns. The partnership team delivered services across the area and addressed ETE, CAMHS, accommodation, substance misuse, reparation and restorative justice. The assessment team had the task of ensuring that all YOS interventions were underpinned by a comprehensive assessment of risks and needs.

Strengths:

- (1) In the three years preceding the inspection the YOS had developed a 'risk led approach'. This culminated in the YOS being chosen by the YJB as one of four national pilots in 2006/2007 to implement risk-based national standards. The pilot had recently come to an end and the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin model made a significant contribution to the planned national approach. The model helped to ensure that resources were targeted at children and young people with the highest RoH, LoR and safeguarding concerns.
- (2) Practice guidance for staff outlined the YOS expectation that a comprehensive risk assessment process would focus on risk issues in respect of: reoffending, harm to others and vulnerability.
- (3) The CPF, chaired by the YOS deputy manager, oversaw the planning and review of all high-risk children and young people. The CPF confirmed which cases should be referred into MAPPA, PPO and safeguarding processes.
- (4) Youth Offender Panels were made up of volunteers recruited from the local community. A dedicated referral order coordinator offered volunteers support, training and one-to-one mentoring. They were positive about the support received to do the work and about the quality of the reports at panel meetings.
- (5) The YOS had developed a number of dedicated intervention centres in local areas, supported by the availability of a range of programmes.

- (6) Many practitioners had been trained to deliver cognitive behavioural programmes and staff were encouraged to use a range of resources to engage children and young people in offending behaviour work, e.g. Pathway Plus, Teentalk and Happy Families.
- (7) A Groupwork Intervention Programme was being piloted in Shrewsbury and Telford and catered for those supervised by the intermediate team. It was a 12 week rolling programme which offered educational and offence linked sessions such as ETE, substance misuse, responsible citizenship, fire safety, victim awareness and sexual health input.
- (8) Almost all cases had a fully completed Asset at the beginning of the interventions.
- (9) All the assessments were based upon at least one interview with the child or young person. Three-quarters of them completed a 'What Do You Think?' form.
- (10) Where parents/carers were involved in the assessments, their needs were taken into account in almost all of the cases.
- (11) Race and ethnicity were clearly recorded in all the cases and diversity issues had been assessed in over three-quarters of cases. Evidence that attention had been paid to the methods likely to be most effective with each child or young person was seen in over three-quarters of cases.
- (12) Three-quarters of cases had evidence of an accurate screening and assessment of RoH to others.
- (13) An accurate classification of RoH was seen in over three-quarters of cases.
- (14) Final warnings were delivered within 20 working days in almost all of the cases.
- (15) Youth Offender Panels had written reports in almost all of the relevant cases. Parents/carers attended over two-thirds of panel meetings.
- (16) Over two-thirds of panel meetings were held within 20 working days.
- (17) In almost all of the cases a timely and good quality intervention plan had been produced. These drew on Asset, other agencies' input and previous YOS assessments.
- (18) All of the plans outlined an intervention programme aimed at preventing reoffending and nearly all addressed victim awareness issues. Almost all of the plans included community reparation.
- (19) Almost three-quarters of cases had been reviewed and this had informed ongoing assessments.
- (20) A review of the RoH was seen in almost three-quarters of cases.

- (21) Interventions challenged the child or young person to accept responsibility for their offending in nearly all of the cases.
- (22) Evidence that interventions addressed the LoR was seen in over three-quarters of the cases.
- (23) Over three-quarters of cases had arrangements in place to address diversity issues.
- (24) Timely and comprehensive induction was delivered to children and young people in almost three-quarters of cases.
- (25) YOS staff monitored attendance across all interventions in almost all of the cases.
- (26) Compliance and enforcement issues were a high priority for the YOS. Appropriate decisions in respect of absences were seen in all the cases and the inspection found that effective action to address compliance issues was taken in over three-quarters of cases.
- (27) Almost all cases had evidence of work to ensure that the child or young person understood the requirements of supervision and the penalties in the event of breach.
- (28) Assessing and addressing accommodation issues was done in over three-quarters of cases.
- (29) Staff routinely demonstrated commitment to their work with children and young people, by motivating and supporting them throughout their order and by reinforcing positive behaviour.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Few RoH assessments adequately addressed victims' issues.
- (2) Shropshire had a considerable number of private residential children's homes and this saw an unusually high number of transfers of cases into the area. Despite the best efforts by YOS staff, there was insufficient evidence that such cases were routinely handled in a planned and timely fashion.

2.6 General criterion:

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

Two specialist CAMHS posts had been commissioned within the YOS who could engage in activity across the CAMHS tiers. The focus of the posts was to provide a bridge between specialist services (multidisciplinary Tiers 3 and 4) and the universal services (Tiers 1 and 2). The two workers were organised on a geographical basis, with one worker linking into Shropshire CAMHS and the other

into Telford and Wrekin. They provided cover for each other during periods of leave or short-term sickness.

The YOS had two substance misuse workers, one attached to the high-risk team and the other to the intermediate team. There were links to the community substance misuse teams for Tier 4 services or where the child or young person already had links to the community team.

Strengths:

- (1) The development of closer working links between the two YOS/CAMHS workers and two substance misuse workers was seen by the YOS to be the most effective way of providing holistic mental health provision for children and young people with multiple needs. Access to other health services was encouraged through existing health structures.
- (2) Effective joint work between YOS case managers and health workers was seen. For example, a joint assessment was undertaken by both workers and the intervention was delivered by the case manager during the planned absence of the health worker.
- (3) Asset assessments routinely drew upon previous health assessments where available.
- (4) ISSP interventions discouraged substance misuse.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Specialist assessments were not always undertaken on those with physical health needs.

2.7 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (2) Joint working protocols were in place between the YOS and both children's services departments, regarding the remand of children and young people to the care of the local authority and for Looked After Children.
- (1) All YOS staff in post in October 2007 had had safeguarding training and newly appointed staff received this as part of their induction.
- (2) Plans were in hand to use Youth Panels in the selection of people applying for YOS positions.

- (3) In all of the cases there was evidence that the social care status of children and young people who had offended had been established and recorded on file.
- (4) Vulnerability action plans had been produced in over three-quarters of cases and almost all of these were of a good standard.
- (5) Two-thirds of cases showed that work in respect of safeguarding issues was appropriate to the needs of the cases.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Records did not adequately outline safeguarding work in almost half of the relevant cases.

2.8 General criterion:

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

The ETE team was made up of two full-time ETE workers. They were being managed by the youth crime prevention manager whilst the partnership manager post was vacant.

Strengths:

- (1) The YOS had an Education Action Plan which identified actions at both the strategic and service delivery levels. It included improving the quality of data collection.
- (2) A system was in place for YOS education workers to routinely contact schools to obtain basic information to inform the ETE aspects of PSRs.
- (3) ETE staff were notified of all children and young people not in full-time provision. They liaised with key ETE stakeholders on behalf of the YOS, with the aim of achieving enhanced education provision for individual children and young people.
- (4) For post 16 year olds, the YOS ETE officers met with the child or young person and Connexions/NACRO/training providers to look at opportunities available and to prepare packages of support.
- (5) The YOS ETE Action Plan provided strategic and operational targets to maximise the ETE provision for all children and young people open to the YOS.
- (6) All children and young people of statutory school age who were not receiving 25 hours of ETE, and all those who were above the statutory school age who were not receiving 15 hours of ETE were referred to the ETE workers.

- (7) ETE staff had recently introduced a team meeting process to review service delivery.
- (8) Well-developed communication arrangements supported joint work between education workers and Connexions staff.
- (9) Connexions for Youth (Shropshire) provided a half-time PA post to work with YOS children and young people. Connexions for Youth (Telford and Wrekin) provided support to the YOS from within the area teams.
- (10) There was sufficient alternative provision for children and young people who had been excluded from school.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Many ETE assessments lacked depth and did not contain information on the behaviour or progress made by children and young people.
- (2) The learning styles assessment process was insufficiently developed.
- (3) There were limited training opportunities available for children and young people in rural parts of the area. Travel difficulties meant that appropriate training provision was not available for all.

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.

In April 2006 a voluntary organisation (YSS) was commissioned by the YOS to develop the parenting strategy and deliver parenting interventions as part of the prevention strategy within Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

Strengths:

- (1) In three-quarters of cases the parents/carers had been made aware of the requirements of interventions undertaken by their children.
- (2) Over three-quarters of cases had evidence that the active engagement of parents/carers in their child's supervision had been facilitated by the work of the YOS.
- (3) Three-quarters of parents/carers had been kept informed of the progress of their child.

- (4) All the relevant cases had had an assessment of parenting skills. All were conducted in a timely manner.
- (5) Almost all of the cases had had a parental intervention proposed and these had been informed by an assessment of need.

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

Outcomes of work with children and young people in the community

2.10 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) There were processes in place to routinely collect service information for some aspects of service delivery (e.g. Viewpoint, feedback from: ISSP, group work, mentoring project, equality of access and parenting). A framework for collating, analysing and disseminating this had been identified.
- (2) Both authorities had strategies for children and young people's participation in the development and delivery of services. The YOS was in the process of implementing those arrangements, e.g. Hear by Rights Standards.
- (3) A complaints procedure was in place and was accessible to service users.

Area for improvement:

- (1) There was insufficient evidence to show that feedback from service users was systematically used to improve the quality of service delivery.

2.11 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) Some outcome data, e.g. aggregated Asset scores, had been presented to the YOS Management Board. A working group had been established to identify how outcomes could be measured and improved.

- (2) The YOS was participating in national (YJB commissioned) and local (YOS commissioned) outcomes studies in 2008.
- (3) Preliminary analysis of the 2006 cohort data (figure awaiting validation) suggested that across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin there had been a drop in the rate of reoffending for YOS children and young people. The 2005 data showed lower rates of offending in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (32.4%) than those found in statistical neighbours (36.5%) and nationally (35.7%).
- (4) The YOS had performed well in reducing the use of custodial sentences, with a figure of 3.44% matching those within the YJB YOS family and significantly better than all but two others in the West Midlands area.
- (5) None of the preventative cases showed an increase in risks relating to RoSH or safeguarding.
- (6) Few of the preventative children or young people had received a final warning or been convicted of an offence since the start of the intervention.
- (7) Progress against first priority criminogenic factors was noted in 81% of preventative cases. 9% showed no change and 9% showed some deterioration.
- (8) Progress against second and third priority criminogenic factors was 70% improvement, 20% no change and 10% showed some deterioration.
- (9) Onset was re-scored in over three-quarters of the cases reviewed. In almost three-quarters of these cases an improvement over the initial score was noted.
- (10) Almost all cases of those who had offended had not had an increase in restrictive interventions and their risk profile had not increased.
- (11) Few who had offended had received a final warning or been convicted of an offence since the start of the intervention.
- (12) Over three-quarters had complied with the requirements of their supervision.
- (13) Asset was re-scored in over three-quarters of the cases reviewed. In two-thirds of these cases an improvement over the initial score was noted.
- (14) Progress against the first priority criminogenic factor was noted in 70% of cases involving those who had offended, 30% showed no change and none showed deterioration.
- (15) Progress against second and third priority criminogenic factors was 52% improvement, 48% no change and none showing a deterioration.
- (16) In cases involving children and young people who had offended, three-quarters showed that the learning outcomes achieved by them had been applied in their daily lives.

- (17) Resources were appropriately allocated in almost all of the cases and the same proportion used resources efficiently to achieve planned results.

Area for improvement:

- (1) At the time of the inspection the YOS had concerns about the accuracy of its reconviction and first-time entrants data. Work was taking place with the police to improve the data collection and sharing arrangements.

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

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

3.1 General criterion:

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

The YOS had a dedicated DTO officer who worked with the child or young person and the institution both through the custodial part of the sentence and on supervision in the community.

Strengths:

- (1) Appropriate information accompanied newly sentenced children and young people with their escort in the 'yellow envelope'. Plans were in place to change this to an electronic transfer of information as part of YJB developments in electronic transmission of information.
- (2) DTO Asset and risk management plans were routinely shared with the institution. These identified the risk factors which needed to be addressed for each child or young person.
- (3) The DTO officer worked with the partners and specialists located within the YOS, including the CAMHS workers, ETE advisors, the housing liaison officer and substance misuse workers. Partnership staff would attend training plan and discharge meetings where there were relevant issues.
- (4) All children and young people subject to custodial sentences were regularly discussed at the YOS multi-agency CPF. This offered an opportunity to review plans and ensure that all appropriate steps were taken.
- (5) It was common practice for the YOS DTO officer to attend all training plan and review meetings and to invite parents/carers and, where involved, children's services social workers.
- (6) ETE staff attended the majority of final review meetings for custody cases and this enabled community-based ETE provision to be accessed quickly.
- (7) An Asset was fully completed at the beginning of the interventions in all the cases seen during the inspection. Two-thirds of these involved contact with parents/carers.
- (8) Two-thirds of initial Assets were found to have been completed to a good standard.

- (9) Children and young people were invited to complete a 'What Do You Think?' self-assessment in three-quarters of cases. All those invited had completed the self-assessment.
- (10) Race and ethnicity were clearly recorded in all cases. Diversity issues, potential discriminatory/disadvantaging factors and other individual needs were assessed at an early stage in three-quarters of cases.
- (11) In almost all of the cases where diversity issues had been identified a plan was in place to address the issues.
- (12) Over three-quarters of cases showed that the RoH to others had been accurately assessed. Almost all of these risk classifications were accurate.
- (13) Almost three-quarters of risk management plans were completed to a high standard.
- (14) The YOS worker assessed and monitored the child or young person's accommodation needs in over three-quarters of cases.
- (15) YOS staff contributed to initial training plans in all of the cases.
- (16) Over two-thirds of training plans clearly stated which elements of the plans would be addressed in custody and which in the community.
- (17) Training plans included interventions to address the LoR, victim awareness and community reintegration in over two-thirds of the cases.
- (18) Two-thirds of the training plans were found to be sensitive to diversity issues.
- (19) Almost all of the cases had contact with children and young people in line with YJB national standards.
- (20) Parents/carers were encouraged and assisted to visit regularly in almost all of the cases reviewed.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Victim issues had not been adequately incorporated into the RoH assessment in half of the relevant cases.
- (2) Arrangements for liaison and information sharing with health centres in custodial establishments.
- (3) The operation of the 'escalation' processes, in which staff brought to the attention of YOS managers problems in accessing relevant health or education services for individual children and young people on release from custody.

- (4) Health and substance misuse workers rarely attended initial training or pre-release planning meetings. Occasionally this led to children and young people being subjected to a duplication of assessment processes.

3.2 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) Almost all cases had a clear record of the social care status of the child or young person.
- (2) In three-quarters of relevant cases the link social worker attended the final review meeting in the secure establishment.
- (3) Vulnerability action plans had been completed in over three-quarters of cases.
- (4) Three-quarters of cases had evidence to show that safeguarding issues had been appropriately assessed.

Area for improvement:

- (1) There was insufficient evidence to show that the children and young people who had been released for custody had had access to holistic health screening.

3.3 General criterion:

The YOS (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) Timely first appointments and a prompt and comprehensive induction were provided to almost all children and young people on release from a secure establishment.
- (2) Intervention plans were appropriately reviewed in over three-quarters of cases.
- (3) Regular reviews of Asset and of RoH were seen in over three-quarters of cases.

- (4) Services to address health and ETE issues were provided in three-quarters of cases.
- (5) Interventions were sensitive to diversity issues in almost all of the cases.
- (6) Contact with children and young people was consistent with YJB national standards in almost all of the cases.
- (7) Staff monitored attendance across all interventions in all of the cases.
- (8) A timely and purposeful home visit had been carried out in almost all of the cases.
- (9) Over three-quarters of cases had evidence that workers had demonstrated commitment to their work with children and young people, by motivating and supporting them throughout their order and by reinforcing positive behaviour.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Work that had commenced in custody had been built upon in the community in just over half of the cases.
- (2) The child or young person's individual learning plan continued into the community in under half of the cases.
- (3) The inspection did not find consistent use of the SQUIFA in helping to identify mental health difficulties.

3.4 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) Few of the children and young people who had offended had seen an increase in restrictive interventions.
- (2) Over three-quarters had complied with the requirement of supervision.
- (3) Progress against the first priority criminogenic factor was noted in 61% of cases involving children and young people who had been released from custody, 39% showed no change and none showed deterioration.
- (4) Progress against second priority criminogenic factors was 44% improvement, 56% no change and none showing a deterioration. Similar findings were noted for the third priority criminogenic factor.

- (5) Three-quarters of cases showed that the learning outcomes achieved by the children and young people had been applied in their daily lives.
- (6) Over three-quarters of them had complied with the requirements of their supervision.
- (7) Asset was re-scored in almost all of the cases reviewed. In over three-quarters of the cases an improvement over the initial score was noted.
- (8) Resources were appropriately allocated in almost all of the cases. Almost three-quarters of the cases used resources efficiently to achieve planned results.
- (9) Attention was given to community reintegration issues in over three-quarters of the cases.

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

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 YOS in feeling safer and achieving closure.

The YOS had developed a Restorative Justice Unit comprising a senior practitioner, victims officer and a reparation worker. The unit was managed by the assessment team operations manager.

Strengths:

- (1) A comprehensive restorative justice strategy and a clear action plan was in place. YOS performance in this aspect of service delivery compared favourably with its YJB defined family and the West Midlands area as a whole.
- (2) The Restorative Justice Unit had offered services in local schools and had draft protocols with three local authority residential children's homes to use restorative justice approaches rather than criminal justice processes where appropriate.
- (3) A protocol addressing victims' issues had been developed in conjunction with the probation area.
- (4) The provision of victim details from the police had improved significantly and all 'YOS 1s' were received via secure email and returned to the officer if the details were not present or correct. The inspection found that timely police notification of victims' details had taken place in almost all of the cases.
- (5) Victims were contacted by phone in the first instance and by letter if this proved unsuccessful.
- (6) The YOS had a dedicated restorative justice assessment tool which helped with considerations of the suitability of both the victim and the child or young person to participate in a reparative process. The process also helped to ensure that victims were clear about the range of opportunities available and assisted them to make an informed choice regarding participation.
- (7) The views of victims were passed to the case manager for inclusion in intervention planning.
- (8) A Victim Policy and Protocol had been developed with local victim support services.

- (9) A process for informing the victim officer of completed victim/reparation work was in place.
- (10) Children and young people subject to final warnings, who were not offered an intervention programme, were asked to write a letter of apology/explanation where appropriate.
- (11) The YOS had led on the introduction of restorative approaches to working with Looked After Children to reduce offending.
- (12) The range of reparation placements was increasing year on year.
- (13) All victims interviewed as part of the inspection reported being happy with the service which they had received.
- (14) Upon completion of a restorative intervention, feedback was sought from victims. Whilst it had achieved a 100% satisfaction level, the YOS recognised that this had been from a small number of victims and was seeking to increase the number of victims providing feedback.
- (15) Almost three-quarters of the cases had evidence that victims' safety issues had been given sufficient priority in the work.
- (16) Almost three-quarters of them had been invited to participate in a restorative justice process.
- (17) Almost all of the cases had evidence to show that their needs had been sufficiently assessed.

Area for improvement:

- (1) Whilst the numbers had been increasing, at the time of the inspection only half of cases showed that children and young people had been involved in reparation work.

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 YOS manager, in an integrated way to maximise the likelihood of improving outcomes for children and young people.

The YOS provided jointly commissioned services to both Shropshire County Council and Telford and Wrekin Council. It was hosted and managed by Telford Council. The Chief Executive of Shropshire County Council Chaired the YOS Management Board.

Strengths:

- (1) The YOS Management Board met on a quarterly basis and had a consistent membership. It was well represented at a senior level by partner agencies.
- (2) A complex yet coherent strategic framework enabled the delivery of youth justice services across a large and diverse geographic area. The YOS had adapted to the differing needs of the two local authorities and had worked with both in order that YOS services were provided at a local level through the available structures.
- (3) The Head of Service for Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting line managed the YOS manager. This helped to ensure close links with the children and young people's agenda.
- (4) YOS performance was overseen by the Management Board. It took an active role in the monitoring of YOS performance against national targets and in the implementation of the annual Youth Justice Plan. The Management Board received clear performance information on a quarterly basis in the form of an exception report which outlined reasons for current performance and progress against goals. Where necessary it agreed performance improvement plans to address areas of concern.
- (5) Members of the YOS management team had clearly identified areas of responsibility for each of the delivery plans contained within the Youth Justice Plan. Team plans were developed and implemented within the framework of the Youth Justice Plan and all staff had targets set within their personal professional development plans.
- (6) Performance was monitored via exception reporting and associated action plans were driven by the performance manager through monthly reports to

team managers. Disaggregated reports to the two individual authorities were provided and performance information was shared with the whole staff group.

- (7) There was evidence of diversity issues being considered as part of the Management Board agenda.
- (8) The YOS linked with strategic partners across the West Mercia area linking with Worcestershire & Herefordshire YOS to ensure that all strategic groups were covered (e.g. representation on the LCJB was shared on an alternate annual basis).
- (9) As a stakeholder in both local authority children's services, the YOS participated in multi-agency training, co-location of services and the use of the lead professional, CAF and TAC models. The YOS manager was a member of the Shropshire Children's Trust and Telford's Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership Board, and was an active member of both local Children's Safeguarding Boards and other key strategic forums within both local authorities.
- (10) The YOS had been involved in the development of both of the Children and Young People's Plans and it had responsibility for delivery of a number of key targets in relation to the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. The priorities for both plans were compiled in collaboration with other existing plans such as the community safety plan, Connexions strategy, equality and diversity strategy, corporate parenting strategy, the Safeguarding Children's Board plans and local area agreements.
- (11) Following a successful bid for a year-on-year grant from the LSC, the YOS and the Connexions Partnership had jointly funded two Connexions PAs to specifically address the provision of ETE for 14-17 year old children and young people who had offended.
- (12) YJB funding underpinned the appointment of the youth crime prevention manager and extending (13-18 year olds) YISP and parenting services across both Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. These services were integrated with children's services and underpinned the development of the youth crime prevention strategy for the YOS.
- (13) Although the YOS was embedded in children's services, there was a strong commitment to both local authorities' safer community partnerships agendas and the YOS was an active partner in the development and delivery of the PPO strategies. The YOS had taken the lead role for the Prevent and Deter strand.
- (14) The YOS manager or deputy manager represented the organisation at all crime reduction forums including MAPP, Antisocial Behaviour Strategic Groups and Integrated Drug and Crime meetings. The YOS manager sat on Shropshire's County Wide Officers' Group (encompassing five CDRPs) which was responsible for the development and implementation of the crime and disorder and substance misuse strategy.

- (15) Service delivery was framed by the TAC model. The approach used the CAF to collect and share information and the TAC to provide a mechanism for staff to work in partnership.
- (16) The introduction of the 'risk led approach' had helped the YOS to focus on both risk and safeguarding. Through the restructuring of the service, and the introduction of risk led national standards, the YOS had aligned itself to the principle of resources following risk.
- (17) Year-on-year improvements in the performance of the YOS had led to the most recent YJB level 4 rating.

Area for improvement:

- (1) The YOS lacked a well-developed approach to capturing and using information on the outcomes of its work with services users.

Partnership and resources

5.2 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) A strong commitment to working in partnership with others to meet the needs of children and young people was seen. This had been reinforced in 2006 with the creation of the YOS partnership team, led by a specific operational manager. This change had an aim of ensuring that the work of all specialists was fully integrated into the YOS and delivered in a coordinated manner.
- (2) There had been substantial investment by all partners in developing the youth crime prevention strategy and linking it to the integrated children's services (e.g. TAC, CAF). This helped to determine targeting of resources within a clearly defined multi-agency prevention strategy.
- (3) To help to ensure closer cooperation and improved service delivery, the YOS had made good links with other services, e.g. Looked After Children and other children's services teams, West Mercia MAPP, housing providers, Connexions, NACRO mentors, adult mental health and substance misuse services, and with West Mercia Probation Area.
- (4) Neighbourhood policing initiatives meant that more resources were being directed at addressing antisocial behaviour; this included the use of the 'Friendly Bus'.

- (5) The police and restorative justice workers had begun to provide training to staff in residential settings to manage incidents more effectively and to reduce the likelihood of Looked After Children entering the criminal justice system.
- (6) There was a transition policy, agreed between Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin NHS Trusts, which outlined the arrangements for accessing adult mental health services.
- (7) The YOS manager was a member of the CAMHS local implementation teams.
- (8) The draft 'Review and Future Services Needs' document, produced jointly by the YOS and CAMHS, identified the long-term needs of the YOS in relation to mental health services. YOS Management Board minutes showed regular discussion of relevant mental health issues.
- (9) The police and the YOS had jointly reviewed service delivery and had reshaped the provision of final warnings.
- (10) The YOS contributed to regional strategic MAPPA and had specific internal assessment and management processes for children and young people at high risk of causing serious harm to others.
- (11) The accommodation strategy for the YOS included a needs analysis, an audit of current provision and the identification of required provision for the future. It had had the involvement of both local authorities and six housing departments, as well as private and non-statutory housing providers. The strategy linked to the Supporting People arrangements and formed the basis of the action plan to ensure that children and young people had suitable accommodation. A number of workshops and partnership interventions underpinned this strategy.
- (12) The YOS was part of a pilot project running in Shrewsbury to help those being released from prison resettle into suitable accommodation and find work, training or education.
- (13) The partnership with the parenting services provider was being monitored and evidence from its operation was used to identify ongoing developments e.g. training with magistrates.

Areas for improvement:

- (1) Formal agreements between the YOS and Shropshire & Telford and Wrekin NHS Trusts to encompass the comprehensive provision of physical and mental health services.
- (2) The financial contribution of the NHS Trusts to the work of the YOS did not meet YJB guidance.

- (3) YOS ETE staff were insufficiently aware of general developments within education services in the area, e.g. developments in respect of 14-19 provision.
- (4) The premises used by the YOS did not allow for service users to be interviewed at the office. This promoted community-based contact with service users but nevertheless reduced the flexibility of YOS staff in addressing contact issues.

Staff supervision, development and training

5.3 General criterion:

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

Strengths:

- (1) A clear performance management framework and learning culture was in place.
- (2) The costed training plan was comprehensive and embraced all staff, including partnership workers and volunteers. In-house training was offered within the YOS and local authority. The YOS also commissioned external training where required for all staff including volunteers. It also linked to the children's workforce development strategy.
- (3) Staff received regular supervision and personal performance development plans which linked directly to the YOS plan. All managers had undertaken an effective supervision course and all essential corporate management training.
- (4) A range of guidance on procedures and protocols was in place and accessible to staff.
- (5) Supervision, annual appraisal, training and development and CRB checks were in place to support all staff and volunteers.
- (6) A comprehensive induction pack for new workers was in operation.
- (7) Mental health workers received good clinical supervision, as well as supervision from operational managers. Regular contact between both YOS and CAMHS managers informed staff appraisals.
- (8) Seconded police officers had good links to their host organisation. This included joint meetings, team and network meetings and development days for the staff.

Area for improvement:

- (1) The YOS had had problems with recruitment and retention of staff in recent years and this had put pressure on key aspects of service delivery. Although steps had been taken to address this issue, it was still impacting on service delivery at the time of the inspection.

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

Appendix 1: Contextual information

Area

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin YOS is located in the West Midlands and covers both Shropshire County Council and the Telford and Wrekin Unitary Local Authority.

The areas have a population of 283,173 (Shropshire) and 158,325 (Telford and Wrekin) as measured in the Census 2001, 10.4% (Shropshire) and 11.4% (Telford and Wrekin) of which were aged 10-17 years old. This was, respectively, the same as and slightly higher than the average for England/Wales, which was 10.4%.

The population of Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin was predominantly White British (98.8% in Shropshire and 94.8% in Telford and Wrekin), the population with a black and minority ethnic heritage (1.2% in Shropshire and 5.2% in Telford and Wrekin) was significantly below the average 8.7% for England and Wales.

Reported crime levels for children and young people aged 10-17 years old across the area at 82.5 per 1,000, were well above the average for England/Wales which was 53.

The proportion of Looked After Children aged ten and over sanctioned for an offence committed whilst Looked After was 12% in Shropshire and unknown (no data available) in Telford and Wrekin. The average for England and Wales was 9%.

YOS

The YOS boundaries were co-terminus with those of West Mercia Police and Probation Areas. Two PCTs, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin NHS Trusts, covered the area.

The Youth Justice Plan 2007/2008 showed that the YOS had 60 staff and 72 volunteers. 70% of staff were female and 7% had a black or minority ethnic heritage.

The work of the YOS was based in one main office located in Telford.

YJB performance data

The YJB summary of overall YOS performance available at the time of the inspection for the period to December 2007 gave Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin a score of 4 on a scale where 5 is the maximum. This was above the national and regional performance and above that of comparable YOSs.

Performance on reducing reoffending received a score of 46.7%, which was significantly below the national average of 56.6%.

Appendix 2: Inspection data

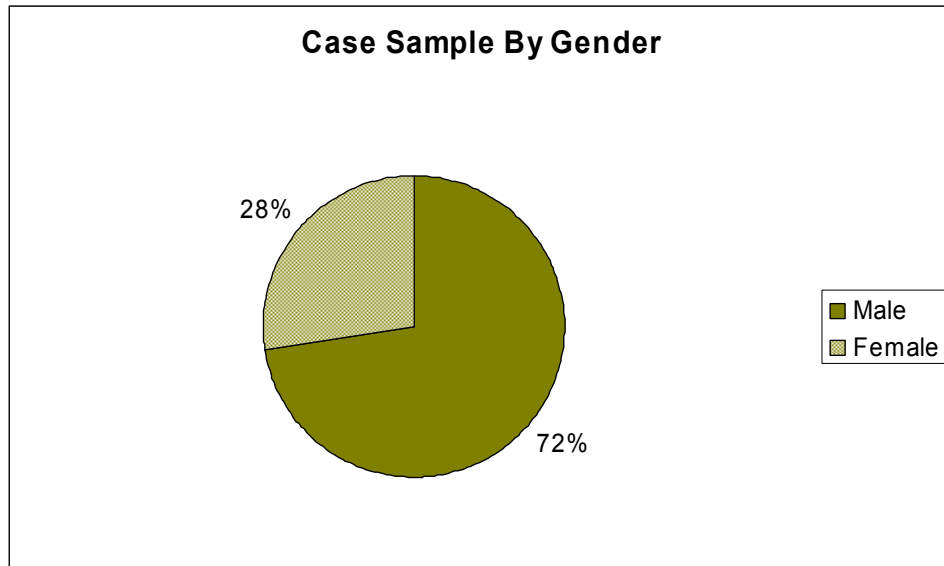
Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken in February 2008. A contribution was made to the Shropshire Joint Area Review in April 2008, and a contribution was made to the Telford and Wrekin Joint Area Review in May 2008.

The inspection consisted of:

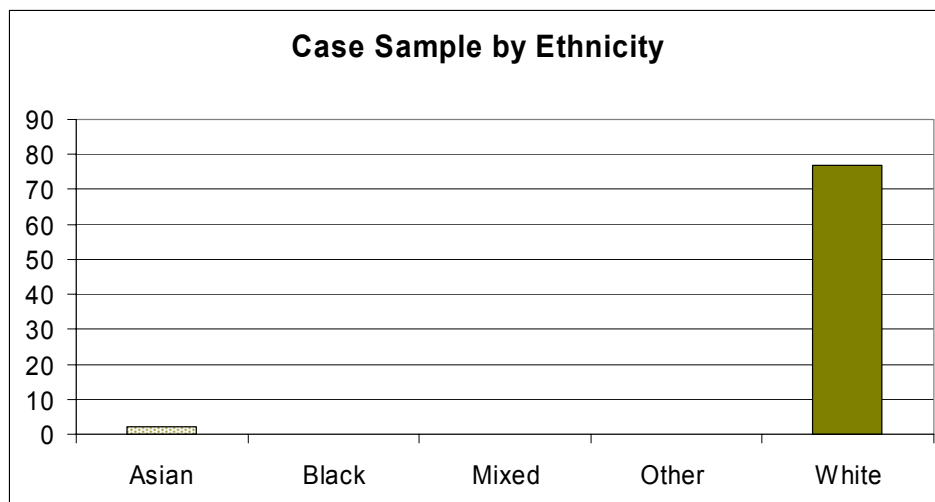
- ◇ evidence in advance
- ◇ examination of YJB performance data and assessments
- ◇ examination of practice in a sample of cases, normally in conjunction with the case manager or other representative, as follows:
 - 12 prevention files
 - 15 final warnings
 - 15 first tier penalties (referral orders, 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

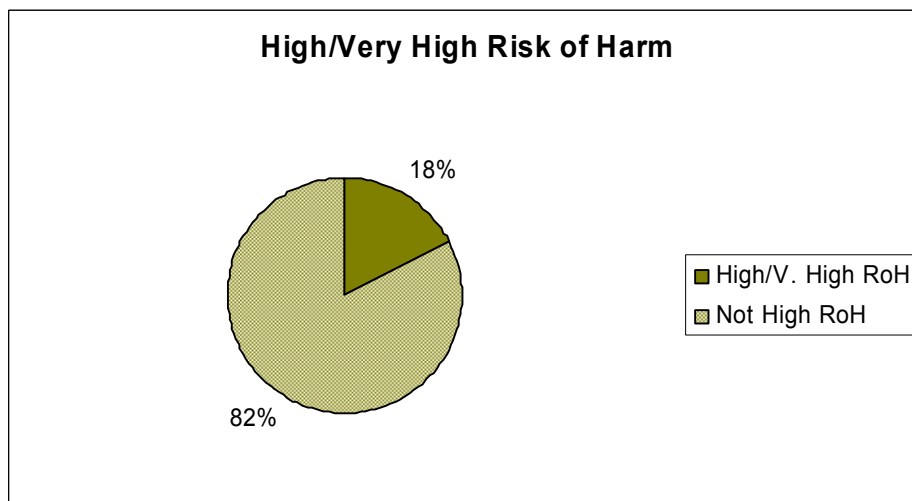
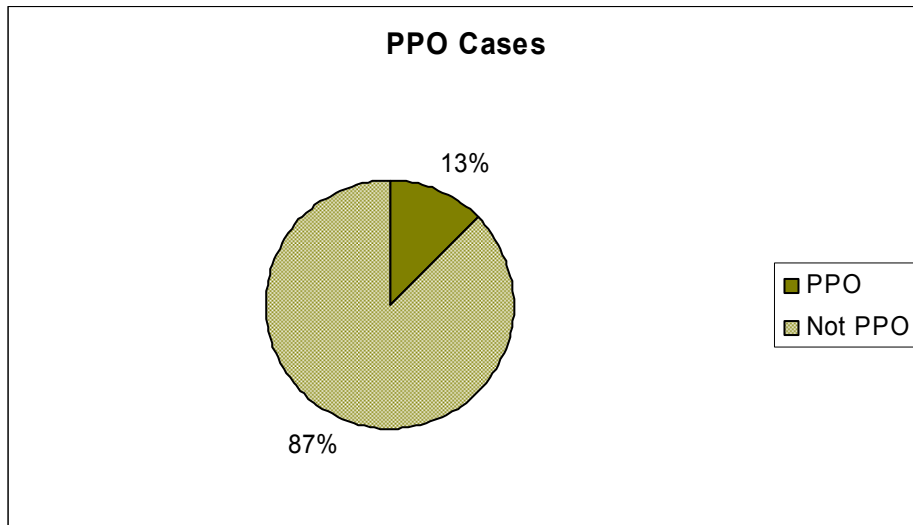
The chosen sample takes into consideration the percentage of girls or young women in contact with the YOS. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



The chosen sample takes into consideration the percentage of black and minority ethnic children or young people in contact with the YOS. 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 YOS/YOS involved, and range from six to 12 cases per sample.



Appendix 3: Joint inspection arrangements

The joint YOS inspection programme began in September 2003 and is the first full inspection programme to examine the work of the YOSs. It has been implemented over four phases, covering all YOSs 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 Youth Justice Board
- 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>